

# **The Practice of Coercive Diplomacy in the Post-9/11 Period**

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Submitted to the

Graduate School of Public and International Affairs

in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Pittsburgh

2006

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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October 27, 2006

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# **THE PRACTICE OF COERCIVE DIPLOMACY IN THE POST 9/11 PERIOD**

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University of Pittsburgh, 2006

The concept of coercive diplomacy has been used as a framework for analyzing various cases of confrontation between two or more states. Coercive diplomacy is the use of threats by a state to force an adversary to concede to certain demands.. Formulated by Alexander L. George, this concept has been used to understand a diverse group of case studies, such as the initial stages of the Vietnam conflict, the conflict in Laos, as well as the Cuban missile crisis.

This dissertation studies four cases from the post-9/11 period and analyzes them through components of coercive diplomacy. These cases are (a) Operation Parakram 2001-2002 India-Pakistan crisis, (b) U.S. coercion on the Taliban September-October 2001, (c) U.S. coercive diplomacy against Saddam's Iraq prior to the March 2003 invasion, and (d) Coercive diplomacy and the North Korean nuclear crisis, 2002-2006.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For a doctoral student the most important part of a successful PhD is a kind and understanding academic adviser. It is safe to say that I would not have reached this stage if it hadn't been for my adviser, Phil Williams. Phil has been an incredible mentor, guide, shrink, and I daresay...friend, over the last six years. His insightful comments on anything I wrote, his willingness to fight on my behalf and his constant readiness to further my academic cause has ensured a debt I cannot begin to repay. Thank you, Phil.

Prof. Dave Bobrow played a huge role in my academic development over the last six years, right from the first class I took with him as a first semester doctoral student. His faith in me has been hugely inspiring. Prof. Janne Nolan and Prof. Dennis Gormley kept me going through stressful times and never failed to lift me up with their kind words.

I'd like to express my thanks and gratitude to my loving family – my parents and my brother – who supported and encouraged me through the years. They've been unbelievably patient with me, and so this dissertation is deservedly dedicated to them.

At Pitt, I would like to thank many friends and colleagues for their support – Rahul Srinivasan, Phil Murphy, Karen T. Cuenco, Anjana Jacob, Senthil Bhaskaran, Lance and Polly Hampton, Xiao Yin Zhao, Betsy Jose-Thota, Anna Loukianova, Wade Ewing, Luke Gerdes, Sriram Balu, Rajeev Anantaram, Nawshin Ali, Art Maxwell, Tabitha Kamolvedj, Vera Achvarina, Tom Hasse, and Miller High Life.

I would also like to thank several other friends (some from my JNU days) for their encouragement, good humor and tolerance of my shenanigans – Megha Bahree, Neerada Jacob, Namgya Khampa, Siddhartha and Urvashi Bhattacharya, Anil Jacob, Anu Chakravarty, Ayesha Ray, Ritu Mathur, Gogi Pillai.

Several senior scholars deserve my thanks for their advice and help with parts of this dissertation. Profs. Sumit Ganguly and Stephen Cohen graciously read the South Asia

chapter and offered valuable comments, for which I am grateful. Commodore Uday Bhaskar and the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi provided a fantastic research environment in the summer of 2005. Senior colleagues there, Kalyanaraman Sankaran, Ashutosh Misra, and V. Krishnappa, were extremely generous with their advice.

This dissertation is also an opportunity to thank several other professors at Pitt who were a constant source of support and encouragement – Don ‘Goldy’ Goldstein, Michael Brenner, Siddharth Chandra, Phyllis Coontz, and Richard Cohen of the Asian Studies Center. I would also like to thank Skip Bradburn, Barbara Porter, Karen Brockington, Lena Thoms, Sue Sawyers, Grace Schetley, and Kendall Stanley for all their kindness and help over the years.

I would also like to thank my JNU professors who played a substantial role in my academic career – Kanti Bajpai, Kamal Mitra Chenoy, Surjit Mansingh, R. Narayanan, and Amitabh Mattoo.

Last, but certainly not least, a special thanks to the University of Pittsburgh squash league, led by David Brumble, and including Charles Bradberry and Suman Barua – thanks for helping preserve my sanity...well, trying to anyway.

## **1.0 THE PRACTICE OF COERCIVE DIPLOMACY AFTER 9/11**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The events of September 11, 2001 constituted a turning point in the way most states perceive international security threats, especially threats linked to terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld symbolized this view when he stated that everything that changed and that the U.S. now perceived all potential threats differently.<sup>1</sup> Thus, from the U.S. perspective, earlier strategies of containment of threats, whether state or non-state were simply not enough. Other states, such as India also felt that it was time to take more stern measures against such threats. These measures included the application of coercive diplomacy, under which a state threatens its adversary with the use of force, or takes limited military action to achieve its objectives.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The key aim of this dissertation is to examine the circumstances under which coercive diplomacy (CD) succeeds or fails in the post-9/11 period. Despite structural changes in the security framework in the contemporary period, (such as the rise of non-state actors and the spread of nuclear weapons) states have continued to apply coercive diplomacy to achieve strategic objectives. Using four prominent case studies from the post-9/11 period, this dissertation examines factors that strengthened and weakened coercion in each

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<sup>1</sup> Ron Huiskens, 'Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: A Case of Intelligence Following Policy,' *Global Change, Peace & Security*, Vol. 18, No. 1, February 2006, pg. 28.

instance. From the policy perspective, it helps highlight key elements of the international security system which impact on successful or failed CD. These conditions cover characteristics of the contemporary international security structure mentioned above – the rise of non-state actors, threat from weapons of mass destruction, and the rise of ethnic and sectarian conflict. Keeping this mind, this dissertation concentrates on the following broad questions:

- What factors strengthened or weakened coercive diplomacy in each case?
- How did the objectives of the coercer and the target impact on the target's decisions?
- On what perceptions were these objectives based?
- How did the coercer, target, as well as third parties, perceive the situation, which then lead to their positions in the coercive equation?
- What role did regional actors and other third parties (such as terrorist/separatist groups) play in the particular cases?

So why is this research relevant? The international security framework during the Cold War was built around concepts and strategies such as deterrence and mutually assured destruction (MAD). Such a global arrangement was replicated regionally, influenced by the superpowers' desire to expand their areas of influence. According to one scholar, research centered around Cold War-period concepts such as deterrence, compellence, and coercive diplomacy have focused mainly on the role of states, especially the U.S.<sup>2</sup> Conditions that permitted the viable application of such strategies no longer exist in their entirety. Confrontation during the Cold War was structured around symmetric warfare,<sup>3</sup> while the paradigm today is asymmetric warfare.

In the absence of the Cold War framework, it is pertinent to ask – Can strategies, built around certain structural characteristics of the international political system, be applied in the contemporary period, when the same characteristics have been diluted or discarded? In other words, given the rise of non-state actors and the threat from WMD, can coercive diplomacy be applied effectively by states?

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<sup>2</sup> Lawrence Freedman, *Deterrence*, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2004), pg. 110.

<sup>3</sup> Even when asymmetric confrontation took place during the Cold War, such as in Vietnam and Laos, it was always under the larger framework of the superpower rivalry, see Lawrence Freedman, "Prevention, not Preemption," *The Washington Quarterly*, Spring 2003, pg. 110.

## Roadmap of dissertation

As stated, this dissertation is based on four cases of CD in the post 9/11 period. The bulk of the dissertation (chapters 2-5) covers an analysis of these cases. While I use analytical variables (contextual variables and variables favoring success) developed by Alexander George, I study them under five broad variables – perceptions, objectives, credibility of threats, internal factors, international strategic environment. In essence, no new variables are being created; this dissertation simply integrates the original ones under broad variables. In each case study, the factors referred specified by George will be referred to for analytical purposes throughout (see Tables 1 and 2 at the end of chapter 1 for a complete list of the original variables – contextual and variables favoring success).

The following sections in chapter 1, I briefly describe the concept of coercive diplomacy, after which I summarize some of the characteristics of the post 9/11 period in the international security system which are relevant to the conduct of CD. Following that I examine some of the literature on coercive diplomacy which demonstrates the factors that have been highlighted in the study of past cases and helps frame this dissertation's cases in the broader context.

The final section of chapter 1 describes the methodology used in this dissertation, including the cases selected as well as a summary of the cases excluded. It specifies the criteria for case selection in the form of 'bench marks.' The methodology section also includes a description of the five variables used to study the cases. The final chapter concludes the dissertation with a comparative analysis of the issues that the individual cases highlighted. It will help understand the qualifying factors of each of the conclusions reached from the case studies.

## Defining Coercive Diplomacy

Coercive diplomacy (CD) is defined as the use of threats and limited force to make an adversary halt a course of action it has embarked on, or undo what has been done already.<sup>4</sup> It is differentiated into defensive and offensive uses. Defensive CD covers "efforts to

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<sup>4</sup> Alexander L. George, *Forceful Persuasion: Coercive Diplomacy as an Alternative to War*, (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1991), pg. 4.

persuade an opponent to stop or reverse an action,” while in the offensive variant, “coercive threats can be employed aggressively to persuade a victim to give up something of value without putting up resistance.”<sup>5</sup> My dissertation, while mainly focusing on the defensive uses of the strategy, goes beyond this limitation. In cases such as the South Asian and the U.S.-Taliban confrontation - movement of troops in an aggressive manner were hardly defensive maneuvers. Force, when applied, is used for the purpose of threatening the opponent. The use of force as part of this strategy is limited however, and restricted to demonstrating to the adversary a willingness to employ larger doses of force if it does not concede to the demands.<sup>6</sup>

The defensive variant of coercive diplomacy is, in turn, divided into three types – (1) Persuading an adversary to stop short of a goal – Type A, (2) Persuading an opponent to undo an action, (3) Persuading an opponent to make changes in the government – Type C.<sup>7</sup> George also formulated coercive diplomacy as involving two levels of impacting variables. The first is a set of contextual variables – global strategic environment, type of provocation, image of war, multilateral or coalitional diplomacy, and the level of isolation of the adversary. The second level involves a narrower set of factors related specifically to the clash between the two states, such as asymmetry of motivation, clarity of objective, leadership, international support, fear of escalation, and clarity of settlement conditions.

Other alternative models can be considered to analyze these cases. Prominent among these are the concepts of deterrence and compellence. A closer examination however reveals that components of these models do not quite fit the cases under question. Coercive diplomacy includes both offensive and defensive variants, while this distinction is not made in compellence. Coercive diplomacy is also more flexible, relying as it does on both threats and concessions, (i.e., a carrot and stick approach), while compellence relies mainly on threats of force.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, deterrence is different because it deals with preventing a state from pursuing a course of action, while in coercive diplomacy, the pursuit has already begun, and the state using CD seeks to stop it.

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<sup>5</sup> Alexander L. George, ‘Coercive Diplomacy: Definition and Characteristics,’ in Alexander L. George & William E. Simons (ed.) *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), pg. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, pg. 11, fn. 3

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, pg. 9.

<sup>8</sup> Alexander L. George, *Forceful Persuasion*, pg. 5.

## Defining success/failure of coercive diplomacy

It is important to specify how we measure success/failure of coercive diplomacy. CD is termed a success if the target state concedes to the demands, without the use of force as the main tool. This implies that threats have been credible and successful. Similarly, coercive diplomacy is termed a failure if the episode leads to a full-fledged war or if the coercer backs down without the demands being fulfilled. If, in the process of carrying out the threats, the coercer fails, or does not prevail, that would also be termed as a failure of coercive diplomacy. The point here is that threat implementation is crucial and has to be successful, especially if the implementation of the threat is integrally linked to the stated objectives/demands (such as regime change).

Success and failure is also dependent upon the number and type of objectives that the coercer has. With multiple objectives, first the hierarchy must be established and then through process-tracing the success or failure of each objective must be established. As a subsequent section specifies, with multiple objectives there is generally a hierarchy and priority among the demands. If there is a single, clear demand, deciphering success/failure is usually not difficult.

## Post-9/11 period and Coercive Diplomacy: Characteristics and Rationale

In the post 9/11 period, the possibility of the use of force and the threat to use force have increasingly become part of the U.S. government's repertoire of policy options. Simultaneously, other states also bandwagoned with the U.S. in order to deal with pressing security concerns, especially terrorism and separatist insurgencies. These states, including India and Britain, supported a more forceful policy against sources of these threats. Other countries, such as Russia, Thailand and Kazakhstan, saw this as an opportunity to act more forcefully against their own internal militant movements.

A second security threat is the prospect of WMD proliferation. Since 2001, increasingly the international community, spearheaded by the U.S., has focused on would-be nuclear weapon states, such as Iran, North Korea, and Iraq under Saddam Hussein. For influential sections of the Bush administration, the only solution to these threats from the so-called 'rogue' states was to overthrow these regimes. It was a reflection of the view that



traditional strategies of containment and deterrence are ineffective against terrorists and rogue states.

Such a conclusion was based on a calculation that the nature of the adversary had changed. Contemporary adversaries, especially terrorist groups (but also ‘irrational’ dictators such as Kim Jong Il and Saddam Hussein) were perceived as being willing to take the punishment and even martyr themselves for a larger cause. Paradoxically this decreases the possibility of success of coercive diplomacy because the objectives of the targets are so non-negotiable (whether martyrdom or nuclear acquisition). Nevertheless, as this dissertation shows, coercive diplomacy has been applied by states,

This was reflected in the 2002 U.S. National Security Strategy which endorsed proactive efforts to deal with terrorism and WMD proliferation. According to the document, ‘given the goals of rogue states and terrorists, the United States can no longer rely on a reactive posture as we have in the past. The inability to deter a potential attacker, the immediacy of today’s threats, and the magnitude of potential harm that could be caused by our adversaries’ choice of weapons, do not permit that option.’<sup>9</sup> Indeed some experts have conceded these policy recommendations now constitute a ‘grand strategy’ that is very different from strategies followed in the pre-9/11 period and the Cold War period.<sup>10</sup>

In such a scenario it is but natural that the U.S. government has increasingly considered coercive measures, whether through full-scale military action or through threats. This was combined with an attitude in the Bush administration that the U.S. would not negotiate with their enemies – the Axis of Evil members, as well as other potential targets such as Syria. However, the accompanying paradox here is that with such an intransigent approach, coercion is weakened because there is very little room for reassurances and ‘carrots’ or concessions to be offered to the target state.

Keeping this in mind, to what extent can the strategy of coercive diplomacy explain some key cases of confrontation in the post 9/11 period. Preliminary research shows that coercive diplomacy and its explanatory components can still be employed to explain

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<sup>9</sup> ‘The National Security Strategy of the United States of America,’ September 2002, [www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html)

<sup>10</sup> G. John Ikenberry, ‘America’s Imperial Ambition,’ *Foreign Affairs*, September-October 2002.

certain cases of state interactions, even when the process includes non-state actors like terrorist groups.

## Archetype approach

As this brief summary of CD research demonstrates, such a policy has been applied across a broad range of issues, ranging from Cold War ideological conflict in peripheral areas, to territorial aggression, terrorism and nuclear proliferation. In order to demonstrate the relevance of this theory for present day conflict situations, this dissertation focuses on an archetype approach in which key issues related to security threats are present in the case studies under consideration. The following table highlights this framework:

**Table 1.** Archetypes

<b>Case</b>	<b>Archetype issue(s)</b>	<b>Strategic position</b>	<b>Can the case be replicated elsewhere?</b>
South Asia	Terrorism Nuclear Proliferation/deterrence	CD between mid-ranking nuclear powers	Yes, for example, Middle East, and Northeast Asia
Taliban	Terrorism State-sponsorship	CD on Fundamentalist regime	Yes, for example, Iran
Iraq	WMD proliferation	CD on Regional dictatorship	Yes, for example, Syria Iran (though Iran is not a dictatorship, it is nevertheless applicable)
North Korea	WMD proliferation	CD by a 'rogue' state on U.S.	Yes, for example, Iran

## COERCIVE DIPLOMACY RESEARCH

Coercive diplomacy can be seen as a successor to the theory of compellence, propounded by Thomas Schelling. This section starts with a broad discussion of the concept of compellence and subsequently talks about coercive diplomacy and its relation to this dissertation's objectives. Research on coercive diplomacy has centered on the application of this theory to numerous cases of confrontation ranging from the Pearl Harbor attack to the first Gulf War. These cases have highlighted several issues that are salient to this dissertation.

## Coercion and Compellence

It would be useful to place the concept of coercion in terms of international relations theory. Neo-realist notions of international relations theory are rooted in the anarchic nature of international politics.<sup>11</sup> This implies a Hobbesian self-help system where, theoretically, all states are on their own and are solely responsible for their security and prosperity. And in pursuing their interests, states use a variety of variants of force. Coercion is one of them. Coercive diplomacy and other forms of coercion come under the overall rubric of the functions of force. Military force can be deployed for many reasons. According to one prominent scholar, force has four functions – (a) defense, (b) deterrence, (c) compellence, and (d) swaggering.<sup>12</sup> This dissertation deals with the practice of coercive diplomacy mainly from a compellent perspective.

It is important to distinguish compellence from other uses of force, especially deterrence. Deterrence is a strategy used to dissuade an opponent from undertaking a course of action. On the other hand, coercive diplomacy is conducted as a reaction to an activity already undertaken. Compellence is similar to coercive diplomacy. According to Schelling, compellence means forcing an opponent into a course of action.<sup>13</sup> Compellence involves using the threat of force or its limited use to make the opponent refrain from doing something that he has already undertaken or persuade him into a course of action that it has not yet begun.<sup>14</sup>

Deterrence also differs from compellence because it “involves setting the stage – by announcement, by rigging the trip wire, by incurring the obligation, and waiting.”<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, “compellence usually involves initiating an action (or an irrevocable commitment to action) that can cease or become harmless, only if the opponent responds.”<sup>16</sup> Crucially, compellence is also different from deterrence because it is generally clearer *when* an adversary has been compelled into adopting a course of action.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979), 102-128.

<sup>12</sup> Robert J. Art, ‘To What Ends Military Power,’ *International Security*, Vol. 4, No. 4, Spring 1980, pg. 5.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, (New Haven, NJ: Yale University Press, 1966), pg. 69.

<sup>14</sup> Art, ‘To What Ends Military Power,’ pg. 7.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, pg. 71.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 72.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Art, ‘To What Ends Military Power,’ pg. 8.

This level of certainty does not accompany deterrence, because it is difficult to demonstrate why something did not happen.<sup>18</sup>

Compellence is also more difficult to achieve than deterrence. This is because compellence requires that a state modify its behavior as opposed to simply stopping a course of action, which is the characteristic of a successful deterrence threat. For an adversarial state it is much easier to deny that it has acquiesced to a deterrent threat than a compellent threat. Modifying policy involves a loss of face, because of the unambiguity of the act. This explains why a state might adopt a more rigid stance in the face of compellent threats, making this process more difficult than deterrence. Thus, 'compellence is intrinsically harder to attain than deterrence, not because its objectives are vaguer, but because it demands more humiliation.'<sup>19</sup> Compellence thus directly impacts on the 'passions of the target state' more than deterrence, due to the suffering and humiliation inflicted on the target.<sup>20</sup> This, in turn, increases the popularity of the target regime and allows mobilization of domestic support to resist the coercer, making compellence more difficult.

In terms of timing, compellence tends to be definite, as opposed to deterrence which can extend indefinitely.<sup>21</sup> Compellent threats require a certain amount of time during which the target state has to concede to the demands. This period cannot be too much or too indefinite, otherwise it becomes an empty threat. According to Schelling, compellence involves threats that are vaguer in their magnitude than deterrent threats.<sup>22</sup> This is usually to avoid self-imposed constraints when it is time to actually carry out the threat. But, according to Robert Art, there is no reason why a compellent threat has to be clearer than a deterrent threat.<sup>23</sup> It depends on how clear a state wants to be in issuing demands rather than on any inherent characteristic of either strategy (compellence or deterrence). Nevertheless, from the perspective of the 'compeller,' it can also be advantageous to have clear objectives, especially if they are limited in nature.

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<sup>18</sup> Art, 'To What Ends Military Power,' pg. 8.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, pg. 10.

<sup>20</sup> Robert J. Art, 'Coercive Diplomacy: What Do We Know,' in Robert J. Art & Patrick M. Cronin (ed.) *The United States and Coercive Diplomacy*, (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2003), pg. 362.

<sup>21</sup> Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, pp. 72-73.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, pg. 73.

<sup>23</sup> Art, 'To What Ends Military Power,' pg. 9.

The role of assurances is also an important contrasting feature of compellence and deterrence.<sup>24</sup> It is easier to convey to the adversary that if it does pursue a policy, there would be punitive retaliation. On the other hand, persuading the adversary to retrace its steps, and that if it does so, no action would be taken, is a lot more difficult to achieve. It is also important that a fight to the finish not be inevitable. Coercion and warfare short of a general all-out war also have to be on the table. According to Schelling, conflict postures, whether deterrence or compellence, are all about how threats are deployed and how one side can adopt behavior patterns in the context of the adversary's behavior.<sup>25</sup>

For the purpose of this analysis, three of the four functions of force outlined at the beginning of this section are important. Two of them, compellence and deterrence, have been discussed briefly. The fourth, swaggering, involves demonstrating a state's military potential through military exercises and acquisition of the latest weaponry.<sup>26</sup> Swaggering can easily have a coercive effect on a state and does not require specific threats.

All these functions of force and the accompanying conflict scenarios can be characterized as part of a bargaining process.<sup>27</sup> Part of a state's aim is to increase its bargaining power through stated commitments to defend or use force in some form and also for the coercer to position itself in a rigid posture which then places the responsibility for a skirmish or a conflict on the target state.<sup>28</sup> Threats, both in compellence and deterrence are an exercise in risk manipulation, the possibility for which rises through limited war and crisis situations.<sup>29</sup> The essence of risk manipulation is to create in the minds of the target state's policymakers the possibility that the situation might degenerate beyond control of the coercing state.<sup>30</sup>

Schelling's work in the sixties can be seen as the precursor to the model of coercive diplomacy that was introduced in the following decade. Indeed, he pointed out that the contrast between 'brute force' and 'coercion' is the "difference between unilateral

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<sup>24</sup> Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, pp. 74-75.

<sup>25</sup> Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*.

<sup>26</sup> Art, 'To What Ends Military Power,' pg. 10

<sup>27</sup> Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), pg. 5.

<sup>28</sup> Phil Williams, 'Thomas Schelling,' in John Baylis and John Garnett (ed.) *Makers of Nuclear Strategy*, (London, UK: Pinter Publishers, 1991), pg. 124.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, pg. 125

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, pg. 125; See also Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*, pg. 188.

‘undiplomatic’ recourse to strength and coercive diplomacy based on the power to hurt.”<sup>31</sup> The crucial point here is that brute force is effective when it is actually employed, while the potential power to hurt is effective only when it is kept as a reserve.<sup>32</sup>

Some of the conditions that constitute successful compellence are also valid for coercive diplomacy. For example, the compellence model underlines the importance of a clear deadline for the opponents to concede to the demands.<sup>33</sup> But a crucial area of difference is that Schelling’s model allows for a general nature to the demands. His opinion is that ‘compellent threats tend to communicate only the general direction of compliance, and are less likely to be self-limiting, less likely to communicate in the very design of the threat just what, or how much is demanded.’<sup>34</sup> The objective of the coercer in this model is also to provide a range of options to itself in case of future changes in the situation. There is thus a difference in the nature of demands in the two models. Furthermore, as pointed out by Lawrence Freedman, Schelling’s understanding of coercion and coercive diplomacy differs from George’s. Schelling focuses more on different types of force as opposed to George, who is concerned with both force and diplomacy.<sup>35</sup>

Coercion is also understood as being part of the practice of crisis management. Crisis management refers to actions by governments to prevent a crisis situation from spilling into a war. However, even though such a goal is paramount, the respective leaderships seek to advance their interests, or at the very least minimize losses.<sup>36</sup> An additional theoretical perspective is that the same conflict might have both coercive and purely military war-fighting dimensions. The coercer will apply the pressure tactics while the target state would respond in an ‘all-out’ manner. The Algerian conflict in the fifties and sixties demonstrated this aspect of coercion.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, pg. 2-3

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, pg. 72.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, pg. 73.

<sup>35</sup> Lawrence Freedman, ‘Strategic Coercion,’ in Lawrence Freedman (ed.) *Strategic Coercion*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998); Peter Viggo Jakobsen, *Western Use of Coercive Diplomacy after the Cold War*, (New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), pg. 21.

<sup>36</sup> Glenn H. Snyder & Paul Diesing, *Conflict Among Nations*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), pg. 207

<sup>37</sup> Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, pg. 174.

Coercion and accommodation are two contrasting elements of crisis management, each having separate goals and constraints. The goal of coercion is to maximize gains for one's side, while the constraint is that the goal has to be accomplished without resorting to war. Similarly, the goal of accommodation is to ensure that a crisis settlement is reached, with the constraint that this must be achieved without conceding too much.<sup>38</sup>

In context of this study, a brief note on the effects of nuclear weapons on coercion would be in order. Writing in the sixties, Schelling's view of nuclear coercion remains frighteningly relevant. Comparing the Vietnam War and a possible conflict in Europe, he stated that if a war was going badly for one side, it might consider a strategy of coercion rather than pure combat.<sup>39</sup> And if nuclear weapons were available, as was the case in Europe, they might manifest themselves as a coercive rivalry instead of merely as a battlefield competition. Another relevant point (especially in the light of recent proposed modifications to make nuclear weapon use more flexible) is that even if tactical nuclear weapons are used as part of battlefield strategy, they do have a coercive effect on target populations and their leadership.<sup>40</sup>

Regardless of these potential consequences of nuclear coercion, one prominent view is that nuclear weapons have ruled out physical nuclear compellence, strengthened deterrence, and not had any clear effect on peaceful nuclear compellence.<sup>41</sup> This is due to several reasons. One is that the use of nuclear weapons can lead to an escalation<sup>42</sup> to the level of a general nuclear war between two nuclear armed adversaries, as was the case during the Cold War and in the present day context, the India-Pakistan and the China-India dyads.

Contemporary security developments have qualified the way nuclear coercion (or compellence) can be applied. But the traditional concept of compellence as propounded by Schelling has its own problems. For example, the notion that states can indulge in risk manipulation does not focus adequately on the reality that in doing so, the coercing state

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<sup>38</sup> Snyder & Diesing, *Conflict Among Nations*, pg. 207

<sup>39</sup> Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, pg. 176.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, pg. 181.

<sup>41</sup> Art, 'To What Ends Military Power,' pg. 15.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, pg. 16.

creates risk for itself.<sup>43</sup> Awareness of this mutual risk poses self-imposed constraints on the coercer. This is especially so when nuclear weapons are involved in the dispute, as is the case in South Asia. A further issue is that of relative weightage of interests on both sides, something that was ignored by Schelling's theory of compellence.<sup>44</sup> As the next section shows, the model of coercive diplomacy did cover this drawback by incorporating the 'asymmetry of interests' variable.

This leads to another issue, that of context.<sup>45</sup> It is difficult to examine a coercive interaction without considering various global and regional issues. When compellence as a concept was enunciated by Schelling, global and regional issues were much different than today. In the sixties, the overarching security issue was the Cold War ideological rivalry. All other global and regional constraints were subsumed under this framework and considered only in context of this rivalry.

Contrast this with the contemporary period. The security situation is defined not by an underlying rivalry between states, but instead, interlinked issues that make a contextual analysis imperative. These issues include WMD proliferation, terrorism, ethnic and religious conflicts, energy disputes. In the Cold War, such issues were superseded by the U.S.-Soviet Union dispute, but now they *are* the disputes and are interconnected. South Asia and the Middle East are good examples. In these cases, territorial disputes, terrorism, religious and sectarian rivalries are combined with energy disputes, and last, but not least, nuclear proliferation. Therefore, global and regional contexts are important in determining a state's motivations, interests, and capabilities when analyzing its compellent or deterrent posture.

Regardless of these drawbacks in the practice of compellence, it retains its influence as an important theoretical framework. As the next section shows, the coercive diplomacy model shares several basic characteristics with the compellence doctrine. From a policy perspective too, the ideas generated by compellence are likely to be relevant, given the continuing deployment of coercive diplomacy.

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<sup>43</sup> Phil Williams, 'Thomas Schelling,' pg. 131.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.



## Coercive Diplomacy: Theoretical Basis

Coercive diplomacy refers to the use of threats and limited force to make an adversary stop a course of action it has embarked on, or undo what has been done already.<sup>46</sup> It requires a credible threat and/or the use of a limited amount of force to convince the opponent of the credibility of the threat.<sup>47</sup> The objective of coercive diplomacy is to achieve one's demands without resorting to a full-scale war, by making the adversary realize that the costs of not complying are higher than the path it has chosen. In the words of Alexander George, the aim is "to create in the opponent the expectation of costs of sufficient magnitude to erode his motivation to continue what he is doing."<sup>48</sup>

According to George, coercive diplomacy has to be distinguished from compellence because the latter does not focus on the offensive and defensive variants of coercive threats. Coercive diplomacy is also more flexible, i.e., it involves diplomacy and accommodation, whereas compellence relies almost exclusively on heavy threats of force.<sup>49</sup> Coercive diplomacy is also different from compellence as it is concerned mainly with reactive threats, which narrows its areas of focus.<sup>50</sup>

So what kind of threat would induce the opponent to comply with the demands? According to George, it depends on the demands of the coercive power and the resistance of the adversary to comply with these demands.<sup>51</sup> The point to be made here is that demands of a lesser magnitude would have a greater chance of persuading the target to concede. On the other hand, massive demands would strengthen the adversary's resistance, making successful coercion less difficult. Furthermore, the nature of the demand determines the *motivations* of the parties and the *asymmetry/symmetry of interests*

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<sup>46</sup> Alexander L. George, *Forceful Persuasion: Coercive Diplomacy as an Alternative to War*, (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1991), pg. 4.

<sup>47</sup> Gordon Craig and Alexander L. George, *Force and Statecraft: Diplomatic Problems of Our Time*, (Oxford University Press: New York, 1995), pg. 196.

<sup>48</sup> Alexander L. George, *Forceful Persuasion*, pg. 11.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, pg. 5.

<sup>50</sup> Peter Viggo Jakobsen, 'The Strategy of Coercive Diplomacy: Refining Existing Theory to Post-Cold War Realities,' in Lawrence Freedman (ed.) *Strategic Coercion*; Peter Viggo Jakobsen, *Western Use of Coercive Diplomacy after the Cold War*, (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1998), pg. 64.

<sup>51</sup> Alexander L. George, 'Theory and Practice,' in Alexander L. George and William E. Simons, *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, (Westview Press: Boulder, CO, 1994), pg. 15.

between them.<sup>52</sup> Motivation refers to the importance each party attaches to the issue, what exactly is at stake for both, and how fundamental the issue is for the two sides.

If the coercive power's demands are much more important to it than they are to the opponent, then the former is at an advantageous position in this asymmetry of interests. But if these demands go beyond this and/or encroach upon the fundamental interests of the target, then the asymmetry of interests is tilted toward the latter and makes coercion more difficult. It is therefore important for the coercer to make sure that the demands involve only its most fundamental objectives, and not those demands that reflect higher ambitions, which are not necessarily important to its vital interests.

Relatedly, perceptions of the other side's motivation and the asymmetry of interests have a bearing on the general dynamics of coercive diplomacy. But within such a strategic interaction, the possibility of inadequate information and problems arising out of assumptions of rationality are also high.<sup>53</sup> Coercion can also be applied through a carrot and stick approach, where threats may be combined with positive inducements in the event that the adversary complies. According to Alexander George, coercive diplomacy (along with deterrence) is part of a larger theory of influence, where coercive strategies have to be combined with inducements and other diplomatic moves.<sup>54</sup>

We also have to consider that the strength of the political establishment in the target state varies. In case of a weak state, the coercer might apply three kinds of indirect strategies: (a) use a third party to bring around the leaders of the weak state, (b) support dissidents or moderates in a state with a deeply divided political establishment, (c) support elements of the target regime's constituency to pressurize the leadership.<sup>55</sup>

A sense of urgency often increases the coercive power. This can be conveyed through verbal threats or through moves such as deployment of military forces. Similarly, the threat of punishment in the case of noncompliance is also communicated through

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> George, 'Theory and Practice,' pg. 15.

<sup>54</sup> Alexander L. George, 'Need for Influence Theory and Actor-Specific Behavioral Models of Adversaries,' *Comparative Strategy*, 22: 2003, pg. 467.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, pg. 464.

verbal actions or military/diplomatic steps.<sup>56</sup> Thus, threats and demands have to be closely related to communication, which involves negotiating, bargaining and signaling.<sup>57</sup>

Two main variables affect the credibility of the coercing power – determination and ability to inflict damage. For effective credibility, both determination (will) and ability to harm must be present. It is not enough to have one without the other. Historical cases suggest convincingly that in the absence of one variable, even when the other is present, coercive moves are not successful.<sup>58</sup>

Rationality of the opponent is extremely important to consider while formulating such a policy.<sup>59</sup> It has to be understood that rationality can be colored by misperceptions and miscalculations as well as by psychological and cultural factors.<sup>60</sup> Instead of merely being treated as a rational actor, the target can be seen in context of an ‘actor-specific’ behavioral model involving analysis of costs and benefits from the opponent’s point of view and estimating the weightage it attaches to these costs and benefits.<sup>61</sup> This implies that it is not adequate for the coercer to be assured that its threats are credible enough, but in fact, what is more important is the target’s view about the potency of the threats.<sup>62</sup>

Assumptions of a unitary actor can also be risky. Labeling the opponent unitary means the target regime is homogenous and that there is unanimity among its leaders.<sup>63</sup> Once the weaknesses of a unitary actor approach are considered it can lead to policies that are tailored specifically at dissident groups and other influential elements of the regime that differ at a very basic level from the leadership in the opponent state.

Strategies of coercion and deterrence come under the overall rubric of bargaining.<sup>64</sup> Throughout history, strategic thinkers and philosophers like Machiavelli and Hobbes have stressed how force can be used as a tool of policy in pursuit of successful bargaining.<sup>65</sup> But with the reality of nuclear weapons in the last six decades, the risks of use of force or

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<sup>56</sup> George, ‘Theory and Practice,’ pg. 17.

<sup>57</sup> George, *Forceful Persuasion*, pg. 6.

<sup>58</sup> Paul Gordon Lauren, ‘Theories of Bargaining with Threats of Force: Deterrence and Coercive Diplomacy,’ in Paul Gordon Lauren (ed.) *Diplomacy*, (New York: The Free Press, 1979).

<sup>59</sup> George, *Forceful Persuasion*, pg. 4.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, pg. 6.

<sup>61</sup> George, ‘Need for Influence Theory and Actor-Specific Behavioral Models of Adversaries,’ pg. 478.

<sup>62</sup> George, *Forceful Persuasion*, pg. 14.

<sup>63</sup> George, ‘Need for Influence Theory and Actor-Specific Behavioral Models of Adversaries,’ pg. 479.

<sup>64</sup> Lauren, ‘Theories of Bargaining with Threats of Force: Deterrence and Coercive Diplomacy.’

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, pg. 184

threats to do so are obviously a lot higher. This affects the possibility as to whether or not a limited conventional or nuclear war can be fought. In context of coercive diplomacy, it impacts on the need to make credible threats.

In terms of purpose, coercive diplomacy can be divided into defensive and offensive strategies.<sup>66</sup> Defensive coercive moves have the objective of forcing the opponent to reverse an encroachment that it has already begun, while the goal behind offensive coercion is to force the opponent to give up what it possesses already.<sup>67</sup> The defensive variant is further divided into three types: (1) Persuading an opponent to stop short of a goal – Type A, (2) Persuading an opponent to undo an action – Type B, (3) Persuading an opponent to make changes in the government – Type C.<sup>68</sup>

The strategy of coercive diplomacy and its success is also affected by some other variables. Prominent among them is the global strategic environment.<sup>69</sup> Demands made on the opponent and following through on the threat is often conditioned by global factors that affect the overall strategic interests of the coercer, or those of concerned third parties. It is thus extremely context-dependent,<sup>70</sup> which means that policymakers cannot ignore the eccentricities of each case.

Also important when analyzing coercive diplomacy are the cost-benefit calculations of a state that is contemplating challenging the deterrent threats of an opponent.<sup>71</sup> According to George and Smoke, when deterrence is being challenged, (say, by the U.S. against North Korea, or India against Pakistan), the initiator can have a range of options available rather than a simple ‘attack’ or ‘not to attack’ choice.<sup>72</sup> The logic behind this conceptual modification is that sometimes the initiator applies pressure that

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid, pg. 193.

<sup>67</sup> As Lauren states, “This distinction is important, however, because of the moral and political implications of making effective use of coercive diplomacy,” Ibid, pg. 207.

<sup>68</sup> George, ‘Coercive Diplomacy: Definition and Characteristics,’ pg. 9

<sup>69</sup> Alexander L. George and William E. Simons, ‘Findings and Conclusions,’ in Alexander L. George and William E. Simons, *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, (Westview Press: Boulder, CO, 1994), pg. 271.

<sup>70</sup> George, ‘Need for Influence Theory and Actor-Specific Behavioral Models of Adversaries,’ pg. 480.

<sup>71</sup> Alexander L. George and Richard L. Smoke, ‘Deterrence and Foreign Policy,’ *World Politics*, January 1989, Vol. 41, No. 2, pg. 173.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

falls short of the more riskier attack approach but nevertheless, involves ‘limited probes,’ or ‘controlled pressure.’<sup>73</sup>

A crucial factor is the type of provocation that persuades the aggrieved party to mount a round of coercive diplomacy.<sup>74</sup> Something which is a clear act of aggression, for example, an invasion, is easier to prove and accords the coercer some legitimacy in the international forum. On the other hand, an act of covert aggression, like sponsorship of terrorism is harder to prove, and therefore, the task of the coercer is that much more difficult. The image of war is also a deciding factor. The more deadly this image comes across, the more chance there is of one or both parties restraining themselves.

## COERCIVE DIPLOMACY CASE RESEARCH

In the aftermath of the end of the Cold War, one opinion was that with the decline of the use of force among major powers since 1945, coercive diplomacy as an instrument of foreign policy was less relevant now.<sup>75</sup> However, as recent cases have shown, states do use coercion as a prominent element of their foreign and security policy. The crux of the issue is that despite the increased importance of non-state actors in international politics, the relevance of states has endured. And even though since the end of the Cold War, most wars fought have been ethnic and religious in nature, they have also resulted in the formation of newer states. Since most states do not have an infinite capacity or inclination for war, coercion of an adversary is a frequent policy option; as a trip wire for actual hostilities. Keeping that in mind, this dissertation looks at a few relevant themes that resonate in the chapters ahead.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> George and Simons, ‘Findings and Conclusions,’ pg. 272.

<sup>75</sup> Brian M. Pollins, ‘Cannons and Capital: The Use of Coercive Diplomacy by Major Powers in the Twentieth Century,’ in Frank W. Wayman & Paul F. Diehl, (ed.) *Reconstructing Realpolitik*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), pp. 29-54.

## Objectives: Magnitude and manipulation

As stated earlier and throughout, a cardinal rule of coercive diplomacy is that the higher the magnitude of objectives, the greater is the target's propensity to resist, especially if these demands contradict its (target's) national interests. In the face of high demands, the target frequently has no choice but to resist, leading to failure of coercive diplomacy. It follows that moderated objectives will then have a greater chance of successful CD.

Coercion in the Laos crisis of 1960-61 demonstrated the importance of modification and flexibility of objectives. Soon after President Kennedy took office in January 1961, he scaled back U.S. objectives to the establishment of an 'independent, peaceful, uncommitted Laos,'<sup>76</sup> from the Eisenhower administration's larger goal of preventing the spread of communism in the area. Limited objectives can also aid in infusing flexibility in future policy-making. The Johnson administration's coercion of North Vietnam in 1964-65 was driven by a need to maintain such a flexibility in terms of Southeast Asia policy.<sup>77</sup>

But even if the coercer limits its objectives, its impact on the coercive process will be felt only if the target also believes that the objectives are indeed limited, and only concern the basic interests of the coercer and not the target. It is thus crucial that the coercer signal unambiguously its actual objectives. This element was not present in China's attempts to coerce Vietnam into withdrawing its forces from Cambodia in 1979. Beijing's attempts to signal its limited intent were subsumed under 'diplomatic noise' over skirmishes on the border with Vietnam.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, since Vietnam had much more at stake in the crisis, and had, in fact, invested considerable resources into the Cambodian campaign, its determination to resist Beijing only increased.<sup>79</sup>

The importance of magnitude of objectives was also demonstrated in the pre-Cold War period case of U.S. coercion of Japan prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor in December

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<sup>76</sup> David K. Hall, 'The Laos Crisis of 1961-62: Coercive Diplomacy for Minimal Objectives,' in Alexander L. George & William E. Simons (ed.) *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, pg. 94, also pg. 105.

<sup>77</sup> William E. Simons, 'U.S. Coercive pressure on North Vietnam, Early 1965,' in Alexander L. George & William E. Simons (ed.) *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, pg. 136.

<sup>78</sup> James Mulvenon, 'The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy: The 1979 Sino-Vietnamese Border War,' *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies*, Fall 1995, Vol. 14, Issue 3.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

1941. U.S. coercive policy on Japan failed because the main demand – complete Japanese withdrawal from China – as well as an oil embargo on Tokyo convinced Japanese policymakers that a war was necessary.<sup>80</sup> This case underscores the point that if one party has accepted that war is unavoidable, and even desirable, coercive diplomacy is not likely to work. It also illustrates the varied methods for signaling such as verbal warnings, and Allied military conferences, both secret and public. In the planning stages of the oil embargo, President Roosevelt's belief was that such sanctions merely posed bureaucratic hurdles (in the form of license requirements from the Treasury department) to the sale of oil to Japan. This was ostensibly meant to provide flexibility to the administration to deal with future changes in the situation – a useful requirement for coercive diplomacy.<sup>81</sup> But it demonstrates that the two sides viewed the coercive policy as leading to different consequences.

Recent research has also analyzed the objective of punitive punishment in coercive diplomacy through the limited use of force against the target, especially strategic bombing.<sup>82</sup> Two recent examples that have been cited here are Operation Desert Fox (December 1998 U.S./U.K. bombing of Iraq) and Operation Allied Force (1998 NATO bombing of Yugoslavia).<sup>83</sup> In context of this dissertation and in the aftermath of 9/11, the U.S. attack on Taliban and Al Qaeda targets in Afghanistan can also be construed as having a punishment element. However, in order to increase chances of the target's compliance with the demands, it is beneficial that the punishment objective be subsumed under actual demands of behavior change. If punitive punishment is the only publicized objective, it is likely to have the effect of increasing the target's sense of victim-hood and hardly likely to ensure compliance in future.

Frequently, coercers also have to maintain resolve and some rigidity in terms of objectives in order to demonstrate to an adversary (whether the same target or a different potential enemy) its determination. During the Cuban missile crisis, President Kennedy's

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<sup>80</sup> Scott D. Sagan, 'From Deterrence to Coercion to War: The Road to Pearl Harbor,' in Alexander L. George & William E. Simons (ed.) *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, pg. 84.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., pg. 69.

<sup>82</sup> Anthony F. Lang, 'Punitive Justifications or Just Punishment? An Ethical Reading of Coercive Diplomacy,' *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 19, No. 3, September 2006.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, pg. 390.

emphasis was on showing determination and resolve, integral to successful coercive diplomacy. This was because any perceived sign of weakness, whether through a willingness to negotiate and bargain, would give the upper hand to Soviet Premier Khrushchev. Since the missiles were already in Cuba, they would have provided Khrushchev with a strong bargaining chip if the U.S. preferred to work for a diplomatic situation initially.<sup>84</sup>

Having said that, it was also clear to Kennedy that some concessions would have to be made, though after American resolve and determination had been demonstrated.<sup>85</sup> One of the prominent objectives behind the bombing of North Vietnam in 1964-65 (apart from pushing back North Vietnamese forces) was to demonstrate resolve and determination in the face of the Communist expansion, as well as to lay the groundwork for the eventual peace talks between the North and South.<sup>86</sup> Similarly, U.S. resolve in acting against Al Qaeda and its associated entities in Afghanistan and elsewhere was conditioned by the need to demonstrate willingness and capacity to combat terror to groups around the globe. Thus, varying degrees of objectives and demands have been put to the target in diverse cases. In some, there was a degree of willingness on the part of the coercer to moderate and/or modify objectives. But as the next section shows, the issue of objectives becomes paramount when Type C or regime change CD is in the fray.

## Type C Coercive Diplomacy and Reassurances

A recurring theme through this dissertation is the application (or the perception of application) of Type C (regime change) coercive diplomacy. This is the most difficult of all CD variants because it automatically raises the target regime's stakes in the crisis to the highest level, leading to an unfavorable asymmetry of motivation for the coercer. Despite this limitation, such a policy has been applied frequently by coercer states.

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<sup>84</sup> Alexander L. George, 'The Cuban Missile Crisis: Peaceful Resolution Through Coercive Diplomacy,' in Alexander L. George & William E. Simons (ed.) *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, pg. 113.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, pg. 114.

<sup>86</sup> William E. Simons, 'U.S. Coercive pressure on North Vietnam, Early 1965,' in Alexander L. George & William E. Simons (ed.) *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, pg. 136.



A prominent failure of Type C CD was the Reagan administration's attempt to dislodge the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua in the 1980s. This objective failed for several reasons that are salient in other instances also. There was very little international support for Washington's goal, including in relevant international bodies, such as the UN and the Organization of American States.<sup>87</sup> The asymmetry of interests against the Reagan administration was further compounded by the lack of domestic support for such an endeavor within Washington.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, the goal of democracy promotion in Nicaragua through Type C coercion, which by itself raises the magnitude of objectives, was worsened by the fact that the chosen U.S. proxy, the Contras, were themselves significantly anti-democratic.<sup>89</sup>

This analysis also highlights an important aspect of successful coercion – the concept of reassurances to the target. According to Schelling, “any coercive threat requires corresponding assurances,” which have to be credible from the target's perspective.<sup>90</sup> While reassurances have been analyzed from the perspective of compellence and deterrence, they are all the more important for coercive diplomacy, given CD's emphasis on carrots/concessions. Assurances have to be explicit and it is not enough to imply rewards in the event of compliance. It is therefore necessary to dispel the ‘perceived irrationality of trust’<sup>91</sup> which prevents states from cooperating.

A key essence of reassurances is that targets of coercion are frequently driven by insecurity which leads them to brinkmanship as well as resistance to coercive threats.<sup>92</sup> Reassurance policies base the root of “hostility not in an adversary's search for opportunity but in an adversary's needs and weaknesses.”<sup>93</sup> The most direct source of such insecurity is fear that their (the target's) regime is under threat. Therefore, if the coercer is not actually pursuing Type C coercive diplomacy, the role of clear, unambiguous reassurances

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<sup>87</sup> Bruce Jentleson, ‘The Reagan Administration Versus Nicaragua: The Limits of ‘Type C’ Coercive Diplomacy,’ in Alexander L. George & William E. Simons (ed.) *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), pg. 193.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, pg. 194-95.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, pg. 184-85.

<sup>90</sup> Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, pp. 74-75.

<sup>91</sup> Term taken from Supriya RoyChowdhury, ‘The limits of the state,’ *The Hindu*, July 31, 2001.

<sup>92</sup> James W. Davis, Jr., *Threats and Promises: The Pursuit of International Influence*, (Baltimore, Md: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), pg. 31.

<sup>93</sup> Janice Gross Stein, ‘Reassurance in International Conflict Management,’ *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 106, No. 3, Autumn 1991, pg. 423.

are essential to conveying to the target that its regime is not under threat. This lessens the target's stakes in the confrontation by tilting the asymmetry of interests away from it, and making it (the target) relatively more amenable to compromise or concession. Unambiguous reassurances are crucial to dispelling any perception gaps between the target and the coercer. Such perception gaps can lead to both underestimation as well as overestimation of threats.<sup>94</sup>

## Non-state actors

While non-state actors, especially terrorist groups in their latest avatar have been major sources of security threats for decades (e.g., IRA, PLO), it is only in recent years that they have begun to dominate the security calculations of policymakers and governments. For countries such as the U.S., nuclear deterrence has traditionally been a major mechanism for warding off threats from adversaries, especially state actors. However, the effectiveness of deterrence against non-state actors has been debated, given that entities such as terror groups do not maintain permanent bases that could be threatened with unacceptable retaliation. This was recognized by President Bush in the 2002 National Security Strategy.<sup>95</sup> However, it is unclear how coercive threats (behavior change) strategies would work either. Nevertheless, states have applied coercive military strategies against terror groups (the U.S. against Al Qaeda/Taliban in 2001, Israel against Hezbollah, summer 2006).

According to one opinion, terrorism itself is a coercive strategy directed against populations and states.<sup>96</sup> Some experts claimed that Spain's withdrawal of its troops from Iraq in the aftermath of the March 2004 Madrid bombings, was such a capitulation to Islamic terror groups.<sup>97</sup> In fact, documents recovered from an Islamist web site soon after

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<sup>94</sup> Janice Gross Stein, 'On Perceiving and Communicating Threats,' in Edward A. Kolodziej and Patrick M. Morgan (ed.) *Security and Arms Control, Vol. 1: A Guide to National Policymaking*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1989), pg. 27.

<sup>95</sup> 'National Security Strategy,' The White House, September 2002, pg. 15, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.pdf>

<sup>96</sup> Joseph Lepgold, "Hypotheses on Vulnerability: Are Terrorists and Drug Traffickers Coerceable?" in Lawrence Freedman (ed.) *Strategic Coercion* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998), pg. 132.

<sup>97</sup> James A. Philips, 'Spain's retreat after the Madrid bombings rewards terrorism,' WebMemo #448, Heritage Foundation, March 16, 2004, <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Europe/wm448.cfm>

the attack revealed that an Iraqi group had strategized that if Spain was hit by terrorist violence it would either force the right-wing Aznar government to withdraw or bring about a loss in the parliamentary elections to the opposition Socialists who would then force the withdrawal of troops.<sup>98</sup> In the event, the latter happened. This shows that non-state actors are no longer mere targets of coercion; they can be the coercers also. This particular example also shows that terror groups can think strategically in terms of effecting changes in the target state's governing structure – Type C coercion.

In order to fight back these coercive and punitive effects of terrorist violence, states have to deploy some strategy as a response. These responses can either be a military attack or an attempt at coercion. In general, scholars have argued that it is difficult to coerce non-state actors because “manipulating the target's incentives short of brute force would appear to be difficult.”<sup>99</sup> Successful coercion of a non-state actor can only take place if the target is convinced that the coercer's motivation and interest in the matter is more than that of the target.<sup>100</sup> But this is difficult to achieve against ideologically driven terror groups that cannot be deterred. However, it becomes easier to coerce terrorist outfits when they have a well established link with a state sponsor.<sup>101</sup> In the post 9/11 world though, this scenario is less likely as state sponsorship is much less obvious now than it was in the two decades before 2001.

Additionally, in trying to coerce terrorist groups, it is also difficult to assess their exact identities, in terms of motivations and hierarchy of preferences, and this impacts on the correct analysis of asymmetry of interests between the two sides.<sup>102</sup> In analyzing a non-state target, governments also risk framing the enemy through stereotypes of fanaticism and irrationality, which is especially relevant when the crisis involves heinous incidents of slaughter and terror (such as 9/11).<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Lawrence Wright, ‘The Terror Web,’ *The New Yorker*, August 2, 2004.

<sup>99</sup> Joseph Lepgold, “Hypotheses on Vulnerability: Are Terrorists and Drug Traffickers Coerceable?” pg. 139.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, pg. 147.

<sup>102</sup> Martha Crenshaw, ‘Coercive Diplomacy and the Response to Terrorism,’ in Robert J. Art & Patrick M. Cronin (ed.) *The United States and Coercive Diplomacy*, (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2003), pp. 310-311.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, pg. 311.

## Third parties and coercive diplomacy

Third parties have played a major role in coercive diplomacy, depending on the global strategic environment (such as Cold War considerations, and terrorism), as well as the relative power potential of the protagonists in influencing third party influence. The importance of regional players, acting to either strengthen coercive diplomacy or weaken it, has been demonstrated in several cases. The logic here is that these third parties (apart from the coercer and the target), in order to further their own specific objectives, can either assist the coercer in strengthening pressure on the target, or they can weaken the coercer's pressure by overtly or tacitly assisting the target in its resistance. The theory of coercive diplomacy takes into account such elements by considering whether the coercer has international support and if the global strategic environment favors pressure on the target.

A more direct conceptual approach would be to examine whether such third parties play the role of 'spoilers' in the coercive process. One argument of contemporary relevance is that multiple actors on either side of the coercive diplomacy equation compound the problem of effective application.<sup>104</sup> This is increasingly important because in any coercive equation, apart from the coercer and the target, other actors (state and non-state) are inextricably involved. This happens because (a) the type of provocation is such (e.g., terrorism, nuclear proliferation) that it is a regional, if not a global crisis; (b) these actors (regional powers, terror groups, disgruntled elements in political, military establishments) see successful coercion or the implementation of the coercer's threats as a danger to their own position or to the stability of the region as a whole.

In the theory of coercive diplomacy, spoilers come under the rubric of factors such as global strategic environment, and international support for the coercer. In its original context, spoilers referred to actors (individuals and groups) who concluded that a peace process in a particular strife-torn region threatened their interests and power, and therefore they sought to undermine negotiations and accord implementation, mainly through violence.<sup>105</sup> In fact, coercive diplomacy has been used against spoilers who hindered

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<sup>104</sup> Art, 'Coercive Diplomacy: What Do We Know,' pg. 369.

<sup>105</sup> Stephen John Stedman, 'Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes,' *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 2, Fall 1997, pg. 5.

implementation of peace process, the main example being air-strikes by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) against the Serbian leadership in 1995.<sup>106</sup>

Within coercive diplomacy, spoilers can be defined as third parties that hinder the coercer's pressure on the target, by directly or indirectly interfering in the process. Recent cases have shown that the U.S. has resorted to limited threats against such third parties to ensure their compliance in a coercive process. One recent case was the reported threats made by then U.S. Secretary of State Richard Armitage to Pakistani President Gen. Pervez Musharraf in September 2001 to get Pakistan's cooperation in the campaign against the Taliban.<sup>107</sup> In a separate case, Washington made threats of economic retaliation against countries that were dithering in their support for pro-U.S. UN resolutions on Iraq prior to the invasion in March 2003.<sup>108</sup>

Cases of coercive diplomacy in the Cold War period demonstrated the importance of third parties, which could act as 'spoilers' or could in fact, be provoked into a larger struggle. The Laos case was a good example of such a possibility, where U.S. strategies were limited by a third party's potential to act as a spoiler. U.S. reluctance to apply military force was partly to avoid a standoff with the Soviet Union.<sup>109</sup> Further, within the Communist bloc itself, the ensuing rivalry between China and USSR made it harder for the latter to encourage a negotiated settlement to Laos.<sup>110</sup> Thus, broader objectives of third parties hindered peaceful negotiations and highlighted the problem of applying coercion against a coalition of opponents. The rivalry between China and the Soviet Union was played out in another case of coercive diplomacy – by China against Vietnam in 1979. China's coercive strategy was tempered by the need to avoid a confrontation with the Soviet Union which had just concluded a mutual defense treaty with Vietnam.<sup>111</sup>

But for Washington, managing the diverse objectives of its own coalition presented a further constraint. This persuaded the U.S. to apply coercive diplomacy on its own

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<sup>106</sup> Stedman, 'Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes,' pg. 13.

<sup>107</sup> 'Bush 'taken aback' about alleged threat to Pakistan,' CNN, September 22, 2006, <http://www.cnn.com/2006/POLITICS/09/22/bush.musharraf/>

<sup>108</sup> Martin Bright, Ed Vulliamy, and Peter Beaumont, 'Revealed: US dirty tricks to win vote on Iraq war,' *The Observer*, March 2, 2003.

<sup>109</sup> David K. Hall, 'The Laos Crisis of 1961-62: Coercive Diplomacy for Minimal Objectives,' pg. 96.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, pg. 98.

<sup>111</sup> James Mulvenon, 'The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy: The 1979 Sino-Vietnamese Border War.'

Laotian ally – the faction led by General Phoumi Nosavan to persuade it to accept the terms of the settlement. This was done by withholding valuable financial aid and withdrawal of special forces troops operating with the Royal Laos Army from forward positions. This underscores two points. First, coercive diplomacy can be applied on an ally to force a settlement. Second, coercive tactics also include withholding of cooperation and aid in any form, military, financial, or political.

As the above example shows, spoilers can also arise from within the coercer's alliance. Another instance was the coercion of North Vietnam in 1964-65, which demonstrated that spoiler problems can also result from the lack of allied capacity (or willingness, for that matter) to adequately complement the primary coercer's military threats. Due to the instability of the South Vietnamese regime, it was not in a position to effectively deal with North Vietnamese-Viet Cong counterattack in response to increased military coercion by the U.S.<sup>112</sup>

While the coercer has to take into account disruptions by possible spoilers, it is also possible to follow a proactive strategy here by manipulating the interests of spoilers in the target's camp. In the North Vietnam case, President Johnson attempted to exploit rifts within the Communist bloc as a complement to coercing Hanoi. U.S. officials were aware that the Soviet Union was wary of increased Chinese involvement in Vietnam if North Vietnam-Viet Cong emerged victorious in the South, which would then lead to Washington intervening more strongly.<sup>113</sup> Possible Chinese intervention was one of the reasons why policymakers in Washington did not make any explicit demands of the North Vietnamese. The air campaign, which began in full in March 1965, was constrained by the desire to avoid widening the conflict.

In its attempt to coerce Saddam Hussein after the invasion of Iraq, the U.S. anticipated significant spoiler problems stemming from the complicated geopolitics of the Middle East. Prominent among these was the Israeli-Palestinian dispute which threatened to derail the anti-Iraq coalition that had been set up to pressurize Saddam into withdrawing from Kuwait. In states such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, the prospects of internal upheaval

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<sup>112</sup> William E. Simons, 'U.S. Coercive pressure on North Vietnam, Early 1965,' in Alexander L. George & William E. Simons (ed.) *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, pg. 135.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, pg. 141.

against the ruling regimes (that sided with the U.S.) was a major concern.<sup>114</sup> Indeed, Saddam tried to disrupt the allied coalition by launching missiles at Israel during the conflict, in anticipation that reprisals from Israel would break up the largely Arab regional coalition. However, one argument holds that Hussein assumed significant levels of support from among the Arab states,<sup>115</sup> implying that there was an expectation that they would play spoilers to U.S. coercive policy. Thus, for a target state, a key element of its counter-strategy is reliance on third parties, and this can then help shape its response to the coercer.

### Importance of internal factors

Apart from the role of internal factors as spoilers, domestic political considerations and abilities also impact on coercive dynamics. Internal political factors guided the formulation of the Johnson administration's objectives in the bombing of North Vietnam in the initial stages of the conflict there in 1964-65. At the time, President Johnson was engaged in bringing about the landmark 'Great Society' legislation in Congress and needed to avoid political polarization.<sup>116</sup> This polarization could have manifested in two opposing viewpoints – the first favoring massive, punitive attacks on North Vietnam, and the second, favoring a withdrawal from the conflict there.<sup>117</sup> An interesting point here is that domestic politics infused caution into the coercive pressures on Hanoi. This is a contrast to the normal impact of domestic political factors, which frequently serve to increase the government's coercion on external parties in an attempt to gain the patriotic high ground.<sup>118</sup>

The crucial role of domestic entities and factors was further stressed in the Pearl Harbor case. Ambiguous interpretations by U.S. internal bureaucracies of the extent of American coercive policy against Japan forced President Roosevelt to take an inflexible

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<sup>114</sup> Richard Herrmann, "Coercive Diplomacy and the Crisis over Kuwait," in Alexander L. George & William E. Simons (ed.) *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, pg. 241.

<sup>115</sup> Richard Herrmann, "Coercive Diplomacy and the Crisis over Kuwait," pp. 236-237.

<sup>116</sup> William E. Simons, 'U.S. Coercive pressure on North Vietnam, Early 1965,' in Alexander L. George & William E. Simons (ed.) *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, pg. 136.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> It would be useful to speculate that in New Delhi, the Congress Party-led coalition's peace moves vis-à-vis Pakistan from 2004 onwards was an attempt to demonstrate to the influential middle class in India that it (the Congress Party) is capable of advancing the country's foreign policy and security objectives.

position.<sup>119</sup> This then led to hard-line views in Tokyo that U.S. policy would lead to a complete oil embargo against Japan, leading to its downfall.<sup>120</sup> The previously mentioned case of Type C CD against Nicaragua was also beset with domestic problems, which in fact led to the illegal arming of the Contra rebels. Thus, the need to maintain a strong domestic leadership as well as internal political and bureaucratic process can have considerable impact on coercive diplomacy.

## Themes of this dissertation

This brief review of existing research on coercive diplomacy gives rise to several issues that this dissertation's cases try to illuminate. First, this review suggests that decision-makers in different instances gave varying degrees of importance to different components of coercive diplomacy. For example, in the Laos case, President Kennedy's emphasis was on limiting the objectives to avoid a quagmire from which it would be difficult for the U.S. to extricate itself. On the other hand, in the Cuban missile crisis, the overriding objective was to demonstrate U.S. resolve to the Soviet Union to prevent the latter from gaining a valuable bargaining chip to exploit in other Cold War flashpoints, such as Berlin. Thus, a government has to decide which objectives are flexible and which are not. A key issue then is to enquire how states can manipulate and moderate their objectives and demands to either secure capitulation by the target or to secure a face-saving way out.

Second, a commonality between past cases and contemporary episodes is the influence of non-state actors. In previous cases, especially those set in the 1960s and 1970s, non-state actors were mainly insurgent groups. Such elements must be distinguished from terrorist outfits because of the differences in their objectives and the fact that several terror groups do not have as clear a 'return address' as several 'insurgent groups' might have. Nevertheless, in some instances, states do apply coercion by targeting other states that have some degree of connection to terrorist groups. Thus, the threat to inflict pain on a state can be used by a coercer to try and secure compliance by a terror group.

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<sup>119</sup> Scott D. Sagan, 'From Deterrence to Coercion to War: The Road to Pearl Harbor,' in Alexander L. George & William E. Simons (ed.) *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, pp. 69-70.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, pg. 71.



Third, increasingly, coercive situations involve weapons of mass destruction as the central security threat. The main such case from the Cold War period was the Cuban missile crisis, and this study extends this line of research by studying one case (South Asia), where nuclear weapons were involved, and two others where the potential threat of nuclear weapon acquisition was the main focus (North Korea, Iraq).

A fourth theme is to investigate how perceptions of Type C coercive diplomacy can play a role in ensuring a target's resistance. Perceptions on both sides of the equation help frame the respective objectives and positions and are therefore crucial to understanding the coercive process in a particular case study. This element is particularly salient when cultural and religious mores influence decision-making.

It is possible that due to communication and perception gaps, the coercer and the target develop contrasting opinions on the variant of coercive diplomacy that is being applied. Thus, while the coercer's demands might suggest Type B CD (behavior change), the consequences of such a behavior change by the target might also lead to regime change. It is also possible that the coercer might not be aware of such an eventuality, and indeed might have to calculate whether Type C CD is in its best interests or not. If Type C CD is not in the coercer's best interests, it implies that some degree of moderation of Type B demands would be required to reassure the target that regime change is not an objective. Relatedly, a key issue is the role of reassurances in tilting the asymmetry of interests away from the target, especially if Type C CD is suspected.

Finally, it would also be useful to examine more directly how non-state actors, and especially spoilers, impact on coercive diplomacy. While the role of third parties has been studied in previous cases, it is crucial to distinguish between the various roles they play, or are perceived to play. Themes such as this and others appear throughout the case studies and help illuminate the salient points in each episode.

## **METHODOLOGY: VARIABLES**

At this juncture, a crucial point regarding the selection of variables needs to be made. The five variables used in this dissertation are derived from the original set of contextual

variables and variables favoring success in coercive diplomacy as envisaged by Alexander George's original model. Throughout the analysis of the case studies, George's original variables will be referred to for analytical and explanatory purposes. The original set of variables are listed in Table 2 at the end of this chapter.

**Dependent Variable (DV):** Success/Failure of Coercive Diplomacy

**Independent Variable (IV):** The independent variables consist of a mix of variables derived from the model of coercive diplomacy:

### 1. Objectives/Demands

The objectives variable impacts on the success/failure of coercive diplomacy in three ways. First is through the *clarity* of demands and threats conveyed; second, through the *magnitude* and multiplicity of objectives; the third is through the type of provocation that leads to these demands.

Important components of effective demands are deadlines, timing, and a sense of urgency, conditions that are necessary, and in the absence of which the opponent does not take threats seriously. If such deadlines are conveyed it also puts pressure on the coercer to maintain credibility of its threats. An important process to be considered here is of communications and signaling of objectives/threats to the adversary and vice versa.

This dissertation also takes into account objectives that might not have been explicitly specified in the demands of the coercer. 'Implicit' objectives can be deciphered through public statements of decision-makers, both prior to and during the coercive episode. An additional method of isolating such objectives would be to examine changes that might have taken place in the coercing state's relations with the outside world that might have contributed to its explicit objectives.

**Hierarchy of multiple objectives:** In some cases the coercer has multiple objectives. The point here is that not all objectives are equally important. Furthermore, the coercer's objectives can change over time. This was displayed in the Laos case, where Washington systematically reduced its objectives, in order to end the conflict. In modifying objectives, the role of 'carrots' is crucial. It can persuade the target state to consider lesser demands more favorably. It is thus important to consider the effect of multiple objectives on the

application of coercive diplomacy. In cases with multiple objectives, any modifications will be specified at each stage.

**Questions:**

- What was the magnitude of objectives and how did this impact on the asymmetry of motivation/interests in coercive diplomacy?
- Did the objectives show any difference in the way the two sides viewed the demands as representing different variants of coercive diplomacy (Types A, B, or C)? In other words, did the coercive policy reflect different coercive diplomacy consequences for the two protagonists?
- Did the coercer modify/moderate the objectives?
- Was there any clarity of settlement conditions?

**Type of Provocation:** The provocation that leads a state to apply coercive diplomacy is an important tool in understanding this strategy. My dissertation covers cases involving a range of provocations, from nuclear acquisition to occupation of foreign territory. An activity by the target state that is unambiguously a crime and violation of international norms makes it easier for the responding/coercer state to gain international support for its efforts. An important issue is thus how the coercer frames its case against the target state for the international community. Thus the importance of communication and signaling is not merely in context of the target state, but also with regard to the international community.

## 2. Credibility of threats

One way of measuring credibility of a threat is by enquiring whether the adversary backed down or countered with counter threats or deterrence postures. Credibility can be measured through an assessment of capabilities, not just in terms of absolute military strength, but through a combination of factors. These factors include past behavior in crisis situations, and whether this has introduced a certain kind of reputation that would impact on credibility of threats.

Thus, part of credibility measurement requires us to enquire into the capabilities and objectives of the coercer and the adversary. This helps establish whether the coercer

actually has the military capacity to carry out its threats. A variant of this approach has been termed as the *current calculus theory* by one scholar, and it regards credibility as being dependent on the existing balance of power and a country's interests.<sup>121</sup> Balance of power is understood to mean the relative military strength of each side and its allies. Current calculus also includes each side's strategic interests, because that impact on its military strength.

Another approach is the *past actions theory*, which essentially states that a country would examine an adversary's past behavior to gauge its intentions and capabilities.<sup>122</sup> Such an analysis then provides useful information on the credibility of the adversary's threats. For the purpose of this dissertation, this variable provides a useful reference point for the two sides of the coercive equation. In each case under examination, a previous episode of conflict, or coercive diplomacy helps to frame their perception of the other side. Past actions theory also covers perceptions of the adversary's overall strategic outlook including its behavior against similar adversaries. For example, after the September 11, 2001 attacks and the global war on terror, the U.S. took recourse to preventive war and developed a pre-emptive strategy while assisting other countries in their pursuit of terrorist networks. Thus it would be logical for a future adversary to assume that Washington's 'past actions' suggest a higher propensity to use force unless, of course, the previous use of force has been unsuccessful and unpopular.

In terms of the model, credibility of threats is further affected by the determination/resolve of either party, which in turn, is influenced by the nature of the provocation and the ensuing demands and objectives. Credible threats and objectives also require adequate information about perpetrators of the provocation. In the absence of such information, it is unclear who the target would be if the threats have to be carried out.

#### **Questions:**

- Did the coercer enjoy overwhelming military advantage over the target?
- Are weapons of mass destruction involved? Did conditions of nuclear deterrence exist between the two sides?

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<sup>121</sup> Daryl G. Press, 'The Credibility of Power,' *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (Winter 2004-05), pg. 140.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

- Does the coercer have military commitments elsewhere? If yes, would it be possible for it to intervene in this specific case?

### 3. Internal Factors

This variable covers domestic institutional factors and public opinion in both coercer and target state. Domestic factors provide another possible reason a state might be persuaded to make coercive threats or resist such threats from an opponent. Recent research has linked domestic factors to flexibility in making coercive threats.<sup>123</sup> According to Schelling, flexibility can detract from the efficacy of coercive threats as it implies that the coercer is potentially open to other options apart from threatening force.<sup>124</sup> Domestically, if a government's accountability increases, and if it appears that failure internationally would lead to downfall at home, this would decrease the margin of flexibility, resulting in a more rigid position while coercing the target.<sup>125</sup>

A different perspective, on the other hand, argues that the very nature of a democracy can enable threats to be more credible and effective, as they are perceived to be backed by strong domestic consensus.<sup>126</sup> Through process-tracing, we can judge whether there is a strong causal mechanism between domestic issues and the success/failure of coercive diplomacy. This variable is divided into three sub-sections which cover the cases that have been selected in this dissertation:

**Public opinion:** With the explosion of communications technology and increasing global awareness, the role of publics in influencing government policy has become a significant factor. This is especially so when coercive diplomacy involves at least some measure of democracy in at least one of the countries involved. Public opinion can also be a catalyst to other coercive policies, i.e., it could persuade a state to ratchet up coercive diplomacy against the target state.

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<sup>123</sup> David P. Auerswald, *Disarmed Democracies: Domestic Institutions and the Use of Force*, (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

<sup>124</sup> Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966), pg. 44.

<sup>125</sup> David P. Auerswald, *Disarmed Democracies: Domestic Institutions and the Use of Force*, pg. 2.

<sup>126</sup> Kenneth Schultz, *Democracy and Coercive Diplomacy*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pg. 2.

**Political competition:** Political competition, defined as rivalry between political parties or factions in the ruling regime, can force either the coercer or the target state to be more aggressive. Political competition is relevant for both target and coercer. When there is competition for political space in the coercer state, the ruling regime has to appear more aggressive in acting against the target. If the regime has a right-of-center ideology (as was the case in India during Operation Parakram), the chances of a hard-line response increase. Simultaneously, opposition groups also have to adopt a more aggressive stance, to narrow the gap with the ruling regime.

Similarly, any concessions by the target state regime weakens its domestic credibility vis-à-vis other political and military factions. This hypothesis is applicable in regimes that are democratic as well as authoritarian.

**Governance Incapacity:** This issue is a particularly relevant one for the contemporary period. In some cases, a target state is incapable of conceding to coercive demands simply because it is unable to carry them out. The control of the target regime over its component factions, populations, territories might not be adequate enough for its decisions to be implemented, even if it gives in to the coercer's demands. When the target is a failed state, coercive diplomacy is less likely to succeed for many reasons. First, there might not be a legitimate regime in place, on which coercive demands can be made. Second, as stated above, even if the regime wants to it might not be in a position to give in to the demands.

**Questions:**

- How did these internal factors impact on the respective positions of the parties in the coercive diplomacy equation?

#### 4. Perceptions of the adversary

A prominent limitation of the abstract model of coercive diplomacy is the assumption of rationality in the opponent.<sup>127</sup> The limitation is that in assuming a 'rational' opponent, the model assumes that "the adversary will be receptive to and will correctly evaluate information that is critical to the question of whether the costs and risks of not complying

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<sup>127</sup> Alexander L. George, 'Theory and Practice,' in Alexander L. George & William E. Simons (ed.) *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), pg. 19.

will outweigh the gains to be expected from pursuing the course of action.”<sup>128</sup> In this dissertation I deal with this issue through a variable that covers perceptions of the other side’s objectives and strategic culture. It might be easier to use the term ‘rationality’; however this term would denote that the other side is ‘irrational’ if its actions are not in tune with the expected response. In fact, within the confines of its culture and traditions, the target’s actions might be perfectly logical and ‘rational.’ Thus, one approach to studying coercive diplomacy involves examining an actor’s beliefs and its images of the opponent as a way of explaining its actions.<sup>129</sup>

It must also be noted that it is not just perceptions of the adversary that are crucial to coercive diplomacy. Any actor has certain perceptions of oneself and what one’s role in the world should be. Thus, in the words of the philosopher William James, “whenever two people meet, there are really six people present. There is each man as he sees himself, each man as the other sees him, and each man as he really is.” Therefore, for both coercer and the target, their self-perceptions of who they themselves are and their self-perceptions of their respective global and regional roles impact on how they frame their objectives (especially in the case of the coercer) and how they frame their positions and responses to coercion (in the case of the target). Perceptions can also be examined in terms of two sub-variables, which are relevant to the present day system.

**Perceptions-Intentions and Capabilities:** The first sub-section covers perceptions about intentions and capabilities of the enemy. This is an important variable, especially in cases such as the U.S.-North Korea interaction. Here, intentions of both sides are murky and not completely defined, which can then lessen the sense of urgency required for coercive diplomacy.

**Cultural perceptions:** Cultural attitudes can frequently inform a regime’s intentions and objectives. A target state’s cultural attitudes can explain differences between a coercer’s perceptions of how the target will react and failure of coercive diplomacy.

#### **Questions:**

- How did perceptions impact on coercive diplomacy?

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid, pg. 13.

<sup>129</sup> Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976), pg. 29-30.

- Did the process of coercive diplomacy proceed in accordance with these perceptions?
- Did the coercer (and target) take into account cultural characteristics of each other ?

## 5. International Strategic Environment

Even though most cases of coercion involve two main parties, there are always other concerned actors, including neighboring states, and non-state groups, who have varying degrees of interest and influence in the coercive activity. In the post Cold War period, for several reasons, other parties are increasingly involved in coercive interactions. First, the number and type of actors in the international security and political system have increased, with the involvement of non-state groups such as terrorist/insurgent outfits, and the rise of ethnic and religious violence. Second, the kind of international security issues that lead to such confrontations involve problems that go beyond national and regional boundaries.

This naturally implies that a larger pool of state and non-state actors would have an interest in the dispute that leads to coercive diplomacy. Thus both the coercer and the target state would have to take into account the objectives and pressures from other concerned actors. On the flip side, it is also possible that in the face of a common threat, groups of states would be more inclined to band together to coerce a target. Thus, increasingly, the international strategic environment plays a role in the success or failure of coercive diplomacy.

### **Questions:**

- How does confrontation impact on the interests of third parties?
- Does the point of dispute impact on other security issues in the region?
- How does the image of war affect third parties in the region? Do the opposing sides possess weapons of mass destruction?

The variables outlined in this section are the basis for analysis in each case study. However, it is not necessary that in each chapter they are located in the same order. The variations are made for purposes of convenience, in terms of the time-line of events as well as for effective analytical flow.



## METHODOLOGY: CASE SELECTION CRITERIA

The criterion for case selection is manifold. The most basic condition is that each case must be an episode of coercive diplomacy, that took place after September 11, 2001. In each case, threats and demands must have been made by one state on another, and any force used should have been limited in nature. The four cases occupy a middle ground between a sample and the universe of cases. An important issue is that of generalization. The cases are varied geographically and cover a wide range of coercers' objectives.

The cases selected all involve states, though non-state actors do have important roles to play in the conflict situations. This facilitates easier applicability of coercive diplomacy as an analytical tool in each instance. It also means that the level of analysis remains at the state level, and narrows the number of cases. One prominent limitation of case studies is the tradeoff between detailed studies of a few cases and achieving broad generalization through a large number of cases.<sup>130</sup> This dissertation attempts to bridge this divide by examining most (if not all) cases of coercive diplomacy after 9/11 under the parameters that I have prescribed.

In the cases selected, there were varying CD results, but it is not clear which IVs were responsible for the individual results. Thus there was variation in both, the DV and the IV. Comparative research designs do not lead to law-like theories, but rather, to 'contingent generalizations.' The same holds for this dissertation where an analysis of past cases of coercive diplomacy will lead to conditional generalizations on how effectively coercive diplomacy as a concept can explain these case studies.

Case studies can help highlight new issues related to the theory being studied and also either reiterate or cast doubt on components of the theory. Case studies contribute to theory building through the development of generalized theories. Moreover, they provide 'historical explanations of particular cases, that is, explanation of a sequence of events that produce a particular historical outcome in which key steps in the sequence are explained with reference to theories or causal mechanisms.'<sup>131</sup> In this sense, this CD study attempts

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<sup>130</sup> Andrew Bennett, 'Case Study Methods: Design, Use, and Comparative Advantages,' in Detlef F. Sprinz & Yael Wolinsky-Nahmias, *Models, Numbers and Cases*, (Ann Arbor, MI, University of Michigan Press, 2004), pg. 44.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid, pg. 21.

to explain certain historical phenomena through testing old hypotheses, as well as considering new ones. Case studies use theoretical variables to ‘show that in the particular historical circumstances of the case, the outcome was to be expected.’<sup>132</sup>

This dissertation uses the structured focused comparison method and process tracing within cases to generate relevant data to specify causal mechanisms. The structured, focused questions have been specified in the variables section earlier.

## Benchmarks

This section establishes parameters for the case studies, some of which have been mentioned in the preceding section.

**1. Target – State/Non-State actors:** The main target has to be a state actor, which may or may not be in partnership with a non-state actor (such as a militant group). Virtually all previous case study research on coercive diplomacy has involved a state as the target. This narrows down the range of cases available, without necessarily compromising on the contemporary relevance of the cases. This dissertation, therefore, considers only those cases where a state is the main target, but which might be associated with a non-state group such as a terrorist outfit. The primary focus of coercion, however, has to be the state entity.

The two cases chosen which involve non-state actors – coercive diplomacy in South Asia (Jaish-e-Mohammed terror group allegedly held responsible for the Parliament attack), and coercion on the Taliban (to give up Osama bin Laden) highlight the contemporary problems of dealing with terrorist networks. While direct state sponsorship of terrorist groups (as in the 1970s and 80s) is on the decline, this does not imply that states have no a role to play in fostering terrorist activities. First, with the phenomenon of weak and failed states, their territory provides bases for fledgling terror groups.<sup>133</sup> Therefore, the role and culpability of states and their ruling regimes is important in examining the use of coercive tactics in dealing with terrorism. Second, even though terrorist groups are typical non-state actors, some of them do have symbiotic relationships with states. States (e.g., Syria in the case of insurgents in Iraq) still use terrorist groups to put pressure on

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Brynjar Lia, *Globalization and the Future of Terrorism*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005), pp. 65-66.

opponents by using such outfits as proxies while maintaining plausible deniability. In return, these groups are given logistical support (and sometimes more direct assistance) of various kinds.

**2. Coercer – State:** This condition stipulates that the coercer has to be a state actor. With a state actor, it is easier to compare threats and their credibility. Having said that, it is true that non-state actors such as some terror groups have acquired a high level of credibility in terms of the threats that they make – an example could be the Madrid bombing of March 2004, through which the responsible terror group was able to influence public opinion significantly, and subsequently the composition and policies of the next government in Spain.

However, the main problem in allowing coercion by non-state parties is the difficulty in figuring out who is applying coercive tactics. In the case of the Madrid bombings in March 2004, it was clear that the perpetrators had at least ideological connections to the Al Qaeda network, but they were also closely linked, logistically, to criminal and drug groups based in North Africa (Morocco, to be precise), as well as overlapping networks of lower-level criminal groups within western Europe that had connections to terrorist outfits. Therefore, there was no clear sovereign entity that was communicating threats. Here, the argument has to be qualified by stating that the terrorist network did not clearly specify what its objectives were.

**3. Type of threat and objective:** The objective of any coercer must be theoretically achievable by the use of threats alone. This would preclude occupation of the target state as the main objective. Regime change is covered by George's model of coercive diplomacy as the type 'C' variant. This is obviously the most extreme version of this model.

**4. Communication of threat and objective:** The coercer has to communicate clearly to the target state what the objectives behind the coercive moves are. Thus the target state has to be aware of what steps it has to take undertake to satisfy the coercer.

**5. Political-Military Strategy:** Coercive diplomacy is essentially the combination of political-diplomatic moves with military strategy. A purely military strategy would not involve reliance on political and diplomatic moves to achieve the objectives. This dissertation covers cases that have the political-military component as the basis for coercive diplomacy. The coercer may also apply economic tools, such as sanctions, but

that is not the central focus of this study. The reasoning here is that in the post 9/11 period, focus on the military element of coercion has increased, though economic strategies retain their importance. Given the kind of issues that are the basis of the cases (nonproliferation, terrorism, insurgencies, regime change), the military element would seem more salient.

**6. Time period:** A useful component of CD is the time allotted by the coercer to the target to concede to the demands. If there is a considerable period of time between the communication of threat and objective by the coercer, this would imply that the target theoretically has the opportunity to agree to the demands. This time period between communication and the full-scale use of military force would be coercive diplomacy.

**7. Archetype:** The case study selection in this dissertation is also based on an archetype/exemplar strategy. Each case is an example of a particular aspect of the international system that is pertinent to the practice of contemporary coercive diplomacy. These archetypes center mainly around the type of provocation (terrorism, WMD proliferation), which leads to coercive activity by the coercer state.

## CASES

### **1. Operation Parakram: Indian pressure on Pakistan 2001-2002**

Archetype: CD between non-U.S. nuclear powers

In the South Asian case, the two main players were India and Pakistan – two non-U.S., nuclear powers. Most case studies of coercive diplomacy have involved the U.S. as the coercive nuclear power. But the proliferation of nuclear weapons (especially, India and Pakistan) and the possible acquisition of nuclear weapons by states such as North Korea and Iran suggest that cases of coercion between nuclear powers might increase in the future. Thus the South Asian case can be generalized to other regions, such as Northeast Asia and the Middle East.

In this case, examining the role of objectives is crucial. Ostensibly, New Delhi's objectives were to force Pakistan to put an end to cross border terrorism and the infiltration of militants, besides the surrender of certain militant leaders responsible for the attack on the Parliament on December 13, 2001. However, an implicit but nevertheless crucial

objective was also to force the United States and the international community to apply pressure on Pakistan to desist from sponsoring violent activities in Pakistan.

For several reasons, the U.S. was deeply involved in this episode – the threat of nuclear confrontation as well as the distraction caused to the campaign against the Taliban and Al Qaeda network in Afghanistan. A useful method of understanding this case is through the concept of pivotal deterrence. “Pivotal deterrence involves the manipulation of threats and promises in order to prevent war. Like other forms of deterrence, it tries to prevent war by making potential belligerents fear the costs, by confronting them with risks they do not want to run... The deterrer must hold a ‘pivotal’ position between the adversaries, which means that it can more easily align with either side than they can align with each other and that it can significantly influence who will win in a war between them.”<sup>134</sup> Arguably, the U.S. played the role of the ‘pivot’ here in forcing the two subcontinental neighbors to step back from the brink of war.

#### **4. U.S. pressure on the Taliban 2001**

Archetype: Terrorism, Coercive diplomacy under conditions of governance incapacity in the target state, i.e., CD against a failed state.

In this particular case, the U.S. sought the surrender of Osama bin Laden and elements of Al Qaeda. The Taliban regime refused to accede to this demand, following which the U.S. launched its offensive against the Taliban. This instance of coercive diplomacy highlights the possible importance of perceptions of the adversary and the ‘image’ created, as explanatory variables. The Taliban is considered a state actor as it was in control of most of the country and was recognized as the legitimate government by several countries. Nevertheless, it is unclear whether the Taliban leadership was in a position to give up bin Laden even if it conceded to U.S. demands.

This case is also examined in context of the previous interaction between the U.S. and the Taliban regime regarding the surrender of Osama bin Laden. Representatives from the U.S. government and the Taliban discussed this in confidential meetings in 1998,

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<sup>134</sup> Timothy W. Crawford, *Pivotal Deterrence*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), pg. 5.

following the embassy bombings.<sup>135</sup> But eventually, the Taliban refused to surrender bin Laden on grounds that such a move would not be tolerated by the Afghan people, especially since he had fought alongside the Mujahideen against the Soviets.

### **3. U.S. pressure on Iraq, 2002-2003**

Archetype: Coercive diplomacy for regime change, counter-proliferation.

In this case, the U.S. attempted Type C coercive diplomacy, i.e., seeking the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. An analysis of U.S. pressure on Iraq prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom is complicated by the multiplicity of competing objectives – connections to 9/11, WMD links and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein.

Recent research raises questions over whether or not this case can be classified as an instance of coercive diplomacy. One opinion is that after December 1998, the U.S. government's expressed policy towards Iraq was not to coerce it but to bring about regime change.<sup>136</sup> The argument is that while regime change is accommodated under the model of coercive diplomacy (as the Type C variant), it doesn't refer to situations where regime change "would almost certainly be suicidal for the current leadership."<sup>137</sup> However, in any instance where the target regime (or ruler) concedes to Type C coercion it would probably be political suicide for the regime.

Further, reports have revealed that Hussein was open to the idea of exile, and had agreed to the plan in principle at an emergency meeting of the Arab League in Egypt just days before the invasion began.<sup>138</sup> Thus, even if it was political suicide, concession by Saddam was not an unrealistic option. But the potential deal did not come about for two main reasons. First, the Iraqi dictator issued certain conditions, including the Arab League's endorsement for the deal. It is unclear what the conditions were and how they impacted on the proposal. Second, the deal was brokered by the president of the United

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<sup>135</sup> 'U.S., Taliban bargained over bin Laden, documents show,' CNN, August 19, 2005, <http://www.cnn.com/2005/US/08/19/taliban.documents/index.html>

<sup>136</sup> Jon B. Alterman, 'Coercive Diplomacy against Iraq, 1990-98,' in Robert J. Art & Patrick M. Cronin (ed.) *The United States and Coercive Diplomacy*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2003), pg. 277.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> 'UAE official: Hussein was open to exile,' CNN, November 2, 2005, <http://www.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/meast/11/02/saddam.exile/>

Arab Emirates, and this was opposed by prominent members of the Arab League, who felt that he (the UAE President) was not influential enough, which then led to the deal being canceled.<sup>139</sup>

The question to be asked here is why coercive diplomacy against Iraq failed, despite the highly credible military buildup and realistic threats by the U.S.? There are several interpretations of this issue. First, the U.S. was not really interested in coercive diplomacy, but only in preventive war to overthrow Saddam Hussein. But even if this were so, there was a considerable period prior to the invasion in March 2003 during which Washington presented its case to the international coalition – a clear sign of coercive attempt. And in this period, if Saddam had accepted all demands (including the implicit regime change demand) this would have undercut Washington's case for a military attack. U.S. policies and statements in the pre-March 2003 time frame thus can be interpreted as declaratory and operational signals as part of coercive diplomacy.<sup>140</sup>

The key issue here is whether the concept of preventive war is incompatible with coercive diplomacy. Preventive war, according to the Pentagon, is “a war initiated in the belief that military conflict, while not imminent, is inevitable, and that to delay would involve great risk.”<sup>141</sup> Thus, preventive war, like any military action, would have certain objectives. If these objectives are achieved through the target backing down, the need for preventive war diminishes. The period before a war begins includes a massive buildup of military forces, alliance formation, as well as presenting a case for military action to the international community. These, by their very nature, are coercive measures, and send an explicit signal to the adversary that the coercer is prepared for war. Thus coercive diplomacy and preventive war can be seen as being part of a continuum of the use of military force. In the first Gulf war also, as military build up around Iraq increased, by October 1990 policymakers in Washington (including the President, Defense Secretary, and National Security Adviser) were reportedly of the view that retaining the offensive

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Corall Bell, 'Iraq, alliances, and crisis management,' *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 57, No. 2, pp. 224-226.

<sup>141</sup> Jeffrey Record, 'The Bush Doctrine and War With Iraq,' *Parameters*, Spring 2003, pg. 7.

option for a preventive war was necessary, while at the same time, all coercive measures were being undertaken.<sup>142</sup>

Thus, if the coercer is serious about going to war and is indeed making all military and diplomatic preparations to do so, it should thus send an unequivocal signal to the target of the seriousness of the coercer's threat. Such military preparations should act as a credible threat to the target and persuade it to consider conceding to the demands. In this case, in the months preceding March 2003, Washington's ample military preparations, public statements by senior officials, as well as the administration's diplomatic campaign would have made its threats as credible as they can be.

Furthermore, at various points in the run up to the 2003 invasion, senior officials hinted that the ultimate objective need not necessarily be war. This was especially so when complete denuclearization of Iraq was the main demand. According to then White House spokesman, Ari Fleischer, "... arms inspectors in Iraq are a means to an end, and the end is knowledge that Iraq has lived up to its promises that it made to end the Gulf War, that it has in fact disarmed, that it does not possess weapons of mass destruction."<sup>143</sup>

As stated, one view regarding this episode is that Washington had already decided on war, and the months before that were spent presenting its case to the international community as well as making military preparations for the invasion. This can be viewed as an example of a 'justification of hostility' crisis, in which "the leaders in the initiating nation make a decision for war *before* the crisis commences."<sup>144</sup> But coercive diplomacy is also closely related to crisis management. Crisis management ensures that coercive diplomacy doesn't escalate into a full-fledged war.

#### **4. North Korean coercion of U.S. and regional actors**

Archetype: U.S. nuclear coercive diplomacy; reverse coercive diplomacy by the target.

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<sup>142</sup> Richard Herrmann, 'Coercive Diplomacy and the Crisis over Kuwait,' in Alexander L. George & William E. Simons (ed.) *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, pg. 243; See also, Bob Woodward, *The Commanders*, (New York, NY: Pocket Books, 1991), pp. 303-307.

<sup>143</sup> Dana Milbank, 'No Conflict on Iraq Policy, Fleischer says,' *The Washington Post*, September 3, 2002.

<sup>144</sup> Richard Ned Lebow, *Between Peace and War*, (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), pg. 25.



In this case, I take the starting point as 2002, when the extent of Pyongyang's program was first revealed. It precipitated the collapse of the 1994 Agreed Framework deal under which North Korea had agreed to freeze its nuclear program in return for energy and financial concessions. Other developments included the expulsion of nuclear inspectors as well as North Korea's decision to walk out of the NPT. In February 2005, it has officially claimed to have acquired a nuclear arsenal, while in October 2006, it tested a nuclear device.

On the part of the U.S., its coercive measures have included the further isolation of North Korea, repeated calls by influential policymakers advocating regime change. This case study is also interesting because it presents an example of reverse coercive diplomacy, from North Korea. In an attempt to extract further concessions from the United States and other concerned parties, Pyongyang has adopted a brinkmanship strategy, under which periodically it provides threatening indications of its missile or nuclear program. Since there is no unanimity on the extent of North Korea's nuclear program, perceptions of its existence and signaling by the regime there is a crucial causal mechanism.

This episode of two-way coercion is examined in light of the previous confrontation between Washington and Pyongyang in 1993-94 that resulted in the Agreed Framework agreement.<sup>145</sup> When studying the U.S.-North Korea dyad, it is necessary to examine the U.S. deterrence mechanism operating on the peninsula against North Korean coercion, as it impacts on Washington's own coercive tactics. Other variables such as objectives of regional powers as well as those of elements of the U.S. government (regime change, for example) have to be considered. In recent years, North Korea has also been accused of running lucrative criminal networks, especially those centered around counterfeit currency.

**Table 2: benchmarks**

<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Cases</b>			
	<b>South Asia Operation Parakram</b>	<b>U.S. – Taliban Sept-Oct 2001</b>	<b>North Korea U.S. 2002-06</b>	<b>U.S – Iraq 2002-03</b>

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<sup>145</sup> William M. Drennan, 'Nuclear Weapons and North Korea: Who's Coercing Whom?' in Robert J. Art & Patrick M. Cronin (ed.) *The United States and Coercive Diplomacy*, pg. 158.

Coercer - State or non-state?	State	State	State (s)	State
Target – State or non-state	State	State	State	State
Political-Military Strategy involved	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Objectives theoretically achievable by coercive diplomacy?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Communication of threat and objective done?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time period given in which the target could have conceded?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Archetype	Terrorism/State-State coercion, nuclear deterrence	Terrorism	WMD coercion	Regime change Counter-Proliferation

## Cases excluded

**1. Iran:** One prominent case excluded is that of Iran. At the outset, the pressure on Iran to renounce its nuclear weapons program would seem like a fit case for coercive diplomacy. However, in this case, even though the U.S. had been forceful in its opposition to Iran's nuclear program, it has refused to deal directly with Tehran. Instead, the European Union, led by Britain, France, and Germany, took the lead in negotiating with Iran. Thus there was no clear process of coercive diplomacy from the U.S. or any other party. Furthermore, there was no clear end to this episode as of 2006, which made a theoretical analysis difficult. If Iran renounced its nuclear weapons program and allows independent inspectors, in that case, it could be examined as a case of successful coercive diplomacy.

**2. Libya:** Another possible case that could have been considered is Libya's renunciation of its nuclear weapons program. After the Gaddafi regime agreed to give up this program in late 2003, Libya was touted as a precedent for U.S. coercive policies. Some commentators also contended that the invasion of Iraq helped coerce Libya; however this view fails to take into account that Tripoli had been involved in discussions over its pariah status for

many years. Since the days of the Reagan administration, Libya had been trying to end economic sanctions that had been imposed on it for terrorism-related activities. Thus even if coercive diplomacy had been in effect, it had been in place for more than a decade. This study concentrates mainly on cases after September 2001.

**3. Syria:** A third possible case was Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon in February 2005 after the assassination of former Lebanese premier Rafiq al-Hariri. It was tempting to see this case as an example of successful coercive diplomacy. But on several counts it did not fit the requirements of this dissertation. First, there was no clear line of coercive activity, whether by the U.S., or the Lebanese government, or any concerned actor. There was however, ample evidence, of how public opinion in Lebanon helped influence Damascus' decision to get out of Lebanon. But this does not suggest a clear state actor behind the coercive activity. Even though the U.S. was strident in its condemnation of Damascus over the assassination as well as Syria's role in providing logistical support (at the very least) for insurgents in Iraq, there was no clear U.S. agenda here. More importantly, this episode had not reached its conclusion yet.

**4. Pressure on Pakistan after 9/11:** The fourth major case excluded was also part of Washington's immediate post 9/11 strategy. Given the close ties between elements of the Pakistani political and religious administration and the Taliban regime, the U.S. government needed Islamabad's assistance in its operations in Afghanistan. In this context, President Musharraf was given an ultimatum to the effect that he was either 'with us or against us,' according to Washington. However, this was an extremely short interaction, and it is uncertain if clear threats were made.

**5. Indian pressure on Nepal 2005:** In February 2005, King Gyanendra of Nepal dismissed the country's democratically elected government on the grounds that it had failed to deal effectively with the Maoist rebels and for not preparing for elections due that spring. Politicians were put under house arrest and the king assumed direct powers, though he lifted the state of emergency in April 2005. Throughout the period, the Indian government pressurized the King to restore democracy and allow fresh elections. To force the King, the

Indian government put the brakes on political, economic and military ties between the two countries, a clear sign of coercive diplomacy. However, since this case was still ongoing, it would have been difficult to place it in context of the model of coercive diplomacy.

**Table 3: Coercive diplomacy (George's model)**

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Contextual variables</b>	<b>Variables favoring success</b>
What to demand of the opponent?	1. Ultimatum variant	1. Global strategic environment	1. Clarity of objective
Whether and how to create a sense of urgency for compliance with the demand	2. Tacit ultimatum	2. Type of provocation	2. Strength of motivation
Whether and what kind of punishment to threaten for non compliance?	3. Gradual turning of the screw	3. Image of war	3. Asymmetry of motivation
Whether to also offer positive inducements and, if so, what 'carrot' to offer together with the stick to induce acceptance of the demand?	4. Try and see strategy	4. Unilateral or coalitional coercive diplomacy	4. Sense of urgency
		5. Isolation of adversary	5. Strong leadership
			6. Domestic leadership
			7. International support
			8. Opponent's fear of unacceptable escalation
			9. Clarity of settlement conditions

## **2.0 OPERATION PARAKRAM – INDIA’S COERCIVE DIPLOMACY AGAINST PAKISTAN 2001–2002**

### **INTRODUCTION**

From December 2001 to October 2002, the Indian subcontinent was yet again on the brink of war following an attack on the Indian Parliament in New Delhi on December 13, 2001. Since 1947, India and Pakistan have gone to war on three different occasions (1947-48, 1965, and 1971), apart from one localized conflict (1999 - Kargil) and two decades of low-intensity warfare (1989-). The December 13, 2001 attack on the Parliament in New Delhi provoked India into launching a coercive diplomatic strategy. Its mobilization of troops was finally halted in October 2002. In this chapter, I examine the conduct of Operation Parakram (as India’s mobilization was termed) through the model of coercive diplomacy and examine how various elements of this model explain this episode.

### **Archetype**

This case study is an important archetype of a scenario in which two regional powers, possessing nuclear weapons, are locked in a dispute stretching back decades. It is also a case in which the problem of terrorist and separatist violence plays a major role. Therefore, this case study analyzes coercive diplomacy from the perspective of two major threats in the international security system – nuclear proliferation and terrorism.

Scenarios similar to this case can be replicated in other regions, especially the Middle East, where Israel and Iran can potentially be involved in a nuclear crisis. This conflict situation also involves the threat of terrorist violence. Another possible coercive

situation involving regional nuclear powers can arise in East Asia, where North Korea has steadily progressed toward manufacturing and testing a nuclear device. It is entirely possible that Japan and/or South Korea could consider developing nuclear weapons to counter this threat. Therefore, the characteristics of this case study of coercive diplomacy in South Asia are present in other regions also, which demonstrates the importance of his research. This is also a crucial instance of a state's particular response to terrorism, which has increasingly become a crucial policy issue for many countries, including the U.S.

It is useful to see the South Asian nuclear dyad in context of the Cold War nuclear scenario. In both cases, the protagonists possessed nuclear weapons and there was a high degree of animosity between them. But there were some important differences that impacted on coercive standoffs. First, the U.S. and the Soviet Union never shared common borders and there was considerable geographical distance between them (although hostility took place in peripheral areas through allies). Second, Pakistan's limited strategic depth and its declared first-use policy in the face of conventional successes by India made coercive threats by New Delhi less effective.

Third, the relatively underdeveloped nuclear command and control systems in South Asia increase the possibility of instability and escalation.<sup>1</sup> Finally, and crucially, third parties, especially the U.S. have believed that the consequences of nuclear instability in South Asia are much worse than in the Cold War period.<sup>2</sup> They point to the fact that during the Cold War, the U.S. and the Soviet Union never directly fought a battle.<sup>3</sup> In contrast, both India and Pakistan have fought three major wars (1947-48, 1965, 1971), besides the restricted Kargil conflict in 1998. Further, the Pakistan-backed insurgency since 1989 has provided a constant source of confrontation, especially since the Indian armed forces have been directly involved in fighting back the insurgency.

From the coercive diplomacy perspective, the idea that the South Asian nuclear dyad is potentially more serious than the Cold War calculations ensures that the international community (especially the U.S. is sensitive to any rise in tensions in South Asia. This has persuaded the international community (especially the U.S.) to intervene in

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<sup>1</sup> Gaurav Kampani, 'Seven Years After the Tests: Appraising South Asia's Nuclear Realities,' Nuclear Threat Initiative Issue Brief, June 2005, [http://www.nti.org/e\\_research/e3\\_64a.html](http://www.nti.org/e_research/e3_64a.html)

<sup>2</sup> For example Strobe Talbott, 'Dealing with the bomb in South Asia,' *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 1989.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

various crises, such as the Kargil confrontation.<sup>4</sup> And as the section on international factors shows, Washington's role in resolving the 2001-02 standoff was extremely crucial.

This study argues that while nuclear weapons forced each side to reassess its aggressive posture, other factors detracted from the credibility of India's threats. The risk of nuclear conflict also forced the U.S. to intervene and pressurize each side (especially Pakistan) to back down, and in the case of Pakistan, to offer concessions. However, the demands that India had made of Pakistan were too rigid and specific for the beleaguered Musharraf regime to concede without a significant loss of face. By making these concessions, Musharraf's rule would have been threatened further from powerful fundamentalist groups within Pakistan as well as hard-line military officers. Further, India's threat credibility was also damaged by the less than absolute conventional military advantage that it enjoyed over Pakistan. Finally, in order to end the confrontation, New Delhi, encouraged by the international community, tacitly modified its objectives. This helped justify ending the stand-off even though its objectives had largely not been met.

This chapter concentrates on the five variables which are the basis of this dissertation – perceptions, objectives, credibility of threats, international strategic environment, and internal factors. The next section provides a brief background to Operation Parakram. Subsequent sections examine Parakram in context of the variables and see how contextual variables, especially asymmetry of interests, influenced this episode. The concluding sections focus on gains and losses for India from this round of coercive diplomacy, and the consequences of Parakram.

## Chronology

Operation Parakram was sparked off by an attack on the Indian Parliament on December 13, 2001 by militants owing allegiance to terror groups based in Pakistan, especially Jaish-e-Mohammed. The Indian government accused Pakistan of sponsoring these groups through political and logistical support and issued a list of demands to Islamabad.

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<sup>4</sup> For a first hand account of American involvement in resolving the Kargil war, see Bruce Reidel, 'American diplomacy and the 1999 Kargil Summit at Blair House,' Center for the Advanced Study of India, University of Pennsylvania, 2002, [http://www.sas.upenn.edu/casi/publications/Papers/Riedel\\_2002.pdf](http://www.sas.upenn.edu/casi/publications/Papers/Riedel_2002.pdf)

Simultaneously it mobilized its armed forces at the border with Pakistan to carry out its threats of military action. During the course of the next ten months, the two countries came close to war on at least two occasions as the international community scrambled to defuse tensions. Though Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf made two major public statements condemning terrorism, Islamabad did not concede to the main demands. Finally, in October 2002, New Delhi stood down its troops stating that its objectives had been fulfilled.

## Background

As the attention of the world focused on the war against terrorism launched by the United States in the aftermath of 9/11, New Delhi was rocked by a terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament on December 13, 2001. The motive was to assassinate top Indian political leaders.<sup>5</sup> The militants belonged to Jaish-e-Mohammed a Kashmiri militant group with close links to the Pakistani Inter-Services-Intelligence (ISI).<sup>6</sup> This assertion was initially made by the Indian government and subsequently verified by a retired head of the Pakistani Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), Lt. Gen. (retd.) Javed Ashraf Qazi.<sup>7</sup> All militants as well several security personnel were killed after a brief gun battle.

This incident transformed India's policy of combating terrorism and separatism. Since the beginning of the Kashmir<sup>8</sup> insurgency in 1989, the Indian government had not taken the struggle to the level of a conventional war with Pakistan (Kargil was a defensive war to evict infiltrators). The conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir began with the partition of the subcontinent in 1947. Wars between the two have broken out thrice, while a low-intensity conflict fuelled by the Pakistan-sponsored militancy in Kashmir already claimed thousands of lives since 1989. The two neighbors came close to war on several occasions after 1971. In late 1984, in response to intelligence reports that India was

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<sup>5</sup> As confessed by Mohammed Afzal, who was part of the logistical network behind this attack. See 'Militants had instructions to mow down MPs,' *Press Trust of India*, December 20, 2001 (Lexis-Nexis).

<sup>6</sup> Davinder Kumar, 'Tracing a Puppet Chain,' *Outlook*, December 31, 2001; Praveen Swami, 'On the Terrorist Trail,' *Frontline*, Dec. 22, 2001- Jan. 04, 2002, Vol. 18, Issue 26.

<sup>7</sup> B. Muralidhar Reddy, 'Jaish behind Parliament attack: ex-ISI chief,' *The Hindu*, March 7, 2004.

<sup>8</sup> Kashmir here and throughout this chapter refers to the province of Jammu & Kashmir.



planning an attack on Pakistan's Kahuta nuclear laboratories, Islamabad geared up for retaliatory strikes on India's nuclear installations.<sup>9</sup>

In 1986-87, a major Indian army exercise, Operation Brasstacks, in the western desert, threatened to turn hostilities as Islamabad perceived the exercise to be a prelude to an actual invasion. Then in 1990, Pakistan's suspicions of an impending nuclear strike by India caused it to prepare for a pre-emptive attack. Tensions were defused only after Washington intervened.<sup>10</sup> The last military conflict was the 1999 skirmish in Kargil,<sup>11</sup> which was restricted to a part of Kashmir and prevented from escalating.

Relations between the two neighbors are thus replete with animosity that has regularly spilled into violence. The situation is all the more risky given the presence of nuclear weapons on both sides. It is with this background that India launched Operation Parakram, a coercive strategy to force Pakistan to clamp down on militant activities. Parakram involved two main periods of tension. The first, in January 2002, came as India's military deployment reached its peak and was defused partly due to Gen. Musharraf's January 12 speech in which he pledged that Pakistan would not be used to foment terrorism elsewhere. The second period of heightened tension was in May-June 2002, following a massacre at an Indian army camp in Kaluchak, in Kashmir, in which families of soldiers were killed. On this occasion also, Gen. Musharraf, under international pressure, made conciliatory statements condemning terrorism and pledged not allow his country to be used for terror activities.

The following sections analyze Operation Parakram through five main variables – (a) Perceptions, (b) Objectives, (c) Credibility of threats, (d) International strategic environment, and (5) Internal factors.

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<sup>9</sup> William E. Burrows and Robert Windrem, *Critical Mass*, (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1994), pp. 349-350.

<sup>10</sup> It must be stated that both sides deny this happened.

<sup>11</sup> Kargil is a border district of Jammu and Kashmir. In the summer of 1999, the Indian army conducted an operation to flush out Pakistani troops militants that had occupied territory across the Line of Control on the Indian side. The operation cost hundreds of Indian lives and was finally defused after the intervention of the United States. For a first hand account of U.S. involvement see, Bruce Reidel, 'American Diplomacy and the Kargil Summit at Blair House,' Center for the Advanced Study of India, University of Pennsylvania, [http://www.sas.upenn.edu/casi/publications/Papers/Riedel\\_2002.pdf](http://www.sas.upenn.edu/casi/publications/Papers/Riedel_2002.pdf)

## PERCEPTIONS

Before examining the impact of India's objectives on coercive diplomacy, a discussion of its perceptions would help understand the issue better. The demands that New Delhi made to Islamabad centered around a need to remove the label of a 'soft state'<sup>12</sup> and finally take some firm and decisive measures to combat the decade-long militancy. A 'soft state,' in international security terms, is taken to mean a government that is unable or unwilling to strike against the roots of security threats in an assertive and decisive manner. It also refers to a state that is unable to implement prescribed policies and "to a large extent explains Indian diffidence in asserting power in the international arena."<sup>13</sup>

The Parliament attack was seen as a strike at the heart of Indian democracy. Political leaders suggested crossing the border (Line of Control-LoC<sup>14</sup>) and destroying the terrorist training camps in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK). One of India's most respected diplomats, J.N. Dixit, who was High Commissioner to Pakistan and then Foreign Secretary, compared India with Israel, saying, "Just look at how Israel reacts. Unfortunately, it doesn't seem to be in our nature to act."<sup>15</sup> Indeed the comparison with both Israel's actions over the decades, and more importantly, with the United States' global fight against terrorism was at the heart of demands for aggressive action by India. Over the years, India acquired the term 'soft state'<sup>16</sup> chiefly because of its inability to decisively stamp out militancy in Kashmir. This label stemmed from a belief that India was reluctant to go after the roots of terrorism (i.e., Pakistan) and treated the phenomenon simply as a law and order problem.<sup>17</sup> In fact, Deputy Prime Minister Advani (who was also the Union

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<sup>12</sup> For a brief description of 'soft state' see P.R. Chari, 'Newer Sources of Insecurity: The Crisis of Governance in India,' Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Policy Studies 3, January 1998, [http://www.rcss.org/policy\\_studies/ps\\_3.html](http://www.rcss.org/policy_studies/ps_3.html)

<sup>13</sup> Baldev Raj Nayar & T.V. Paul, *India in the World Order*, (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 60-61.

<sup>14</sup> Line of Control is the de facto border between India and Pakistan and is the military control line.

<sup>15</sup> Sukumar Muralidharan, 'The Question of Terror,' *Frontline*, Dec. 22, 2001-Jan. 04, 2002, Vol. 18, (26).

<sup>16</sup> Vir Sanghvi, 'Under Pressure: The Soft State,' *The Hindustan Times*, January 12, 2002; Shekhar Gupta, 'India's Pre-Summit Jitters,' *The Indian Express*, July 7, 2001.

<sup>17</sup> Brahma Chellaney, 'India's New Hardline on Terror,' *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, January 3, 2002.

Home Minister at the time of the attack) himself admitted this national attitude, saying, “We are a soft state when it comes to terrorism.”<sup>18</sup>

Perceptions are shaped by the coercer’s past behavior in similar situations and this helps to either strengthen or weaken credibility of threats. Historically, the Indian government has a reputation of being indecisive and not tough enough when dealing with these kinds of terrorist incidents. The starting point of present day militancy in Kashmir in December 1989 was itself a capitulation by New Delhi in response to the kidnapping of the daughter of the then Home Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed<sup>19</sup> by the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF). She was released only after five jailed militants were set free. That submission encouraged the rise of violence in the state.<sup>20</sup>

This pattern was repeated in December 1999 when Indian Airlines Flight IC-814 was hijacked to Kandahar, Afghanistan. The hijackers, five Pakistan-based militants demanded the release of three Kashmiri militants from Indian prisons. The Indian government conceded to the demands and released these militants, the most prominent of whom was Maulana Masood Azhar. Azhar subsequently founded Jaish-e-Mohammed in Pakistan. It was this militant group that carried out the Parliament attack.<sup>21</sup> Thus, the actions of the Indian government in a previous encounter involving the same militant (Azhar) hardly added to the credibility of its threats following the Parliament attack. As it was, the same ruling party (BJP) was in power (as a coalition) during the 1999 hijacking as well as during the Parliament attack.

At this point, K.P.S. Gill, former chief of Punjab Police (from 1988-1990 and 1991-1995), who was credited with clamping down on the Punjab militancy stated that, “Our self perception appears no better. All our policies and responses over the past year (can we ever forget the disgrace of Kandahar?) have communicated a single, unambiguous message to the enemy – that we are exhausted, unnerved and desperate for a ‘solution’ at any cost. That we are willing, in other words, to negotiate with just anyone, and on our

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<sup>18</sup> Vir Sanghvi, ‘Under Pressure: The Soft State.’

<sup>19</sup> The Home Minister is responsible for overall internal security within the country. Sayeed was later chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir from October 2002 to November 2005.

<sup>20</sup> Sumit Ganguly, *Conflict Unending: India-Pakistan Tensions Since 1947*, (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2001), pg. 91.

<sup>21</sup> After the Parliament attack, Masood Azhar denied that his group had carried out the attack, ‘Jaish denies hand in attack,’ Rediff.com, December 17, 2001, <http://www.rediff.com/news/2001/dec/17parl6.htm>

knees.”<sup>22</sup> This also suggested a desire to change the view of India among policymakers and experts in Pakistan from that of a weak state to one befitting India’s status as a regional power.

Further, the Indian response to the hijacking was perceived as a capitulation not just to militant groups and their sponsors in Pakistan, but also to the Taliban,<sup>23</sup> which New Delhi had opposed throughout the Afghan civil war in favor of the Northern Alliance. The fact that the Indian foreign minister Jaswant Singh escorted the militants to Kandahar, amidst rumors of a ransom payment that have persisted for years, made this perceived capitulation even starker. Consequently, subsequent policy choices were based on the need to throw off this reputation of India as a ‘soft state’ and demonstrate to its adversaries that it was capable of making tough choices.<sup>24</sup>

Additionally, it is also important to note that, in the midst of such posturing, the BJP-led government also wanted to demonstrate to the domestic audience that it alone was capable of safe-guarding the country. As the section on internal factors states, the party had decided after 9/11 to use terrorism as a vote gathering tool. The country’s largest province, Uttar Pradesh, was due to go to the polls in February 2002, and it was an extremely crucial state for the BJP’s future electoral prospects. As it happens, the BJP’s security credentials had already taken a beating in the period before 9/11 when the defense minister George Fernandes had to step down due to a corruption scandal. Thus, the need to portray an image of a strong security-minded political party to the country’s population was one of the broader objectives of the BJP government.

The image of the Indian government, both among the Indian intelligentsia as well as militant groups, is therefore, of a weak and indecisive establishment. The counter-argument to this is that the Kargil episode showed that New Delhi was capable of taking

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<sup>22</sup> K.P.S. Gill, ‘Kashmir and the defence of democracy,’ *The Pioneer*, August 19, 2000.

<sup>23</sup> See for example, Brahma Chellaney, ‘The hijack crisis bares India’s political diffidence and diplomatic credibility,’ Rediff.com, January 7, 2000, <http://in.rediff.com/news/2000/jan/07hijack.htm>

<sup>24</sup> On the other hand there are other incidents where New Delhi did not give in to demands of Kashmiri militants. The first was the February 1984 kidnapping by JKLF of the Indian diplomat Ravindra Mhatre in Britain. The JKLF wanted the release of one of their leaders, Maqbool Butt, from an Indian prison. Mhatre was killed by the kidnappers, and within a week, Butt was executed. In second instance militants belonging to Al Faran kidnapped six western tourists in Kashmir and demanded the release of Masood Azhar, the chief of Harkat-ul Ansar. The government refused and all hostages were killed, though the remains of only two of them have been found. Azhar is the same militant leader who was released during the IC-814 hijacking, and who founded Jaish-e Mohammed.

decisive action when required. However, there is an important distinction between Kargil and other major incidents such as the Parliament attack and the IC-814 hijacking. In the Kargil episode, Pakistan-based militants and Pakistan Army soldiers occupied actual chunks of territory leaving New Delhi with no option but to launch a military offensive. Thus the crucial point here is that Kargil was a purely military episode, while the Parliament attack and the IC-814 hijacking were terrorist incidents.

This constituted a crucial contextual variable from the coercive diplomacy model – type of provocation – that helped to shape perceptions of the concerned parties. The Kargil episode, involving occupation of territory by the adversary, was a tangible one which could (and was) demonstrated to the international community, improving the Indian government's position, and in the process contributing to the isolation of the adversary – another contextual variable. But these factors were not in New Delhi's favor after the Parliament attack. The Parliament attack (and the IC-814 hijacking) involved terrorist violence, in which the possibility of the adversary invoking plausible deniability is high, especially since no group took responsibility.

Further indication of the importance of the type of provocation came during Parakram, when Pakistani troops occupied several peaks and positions on the Indian side of the Line of Control (LoC) in the Kargil and Drass sectors. This episode, which took place in the period July-September 2002, was met with an aggressive Indian military response. Assaults by Indian Air Force Mirage-2000 jets and Indian Army artillery led to the recapture of the Loonda Post and Point 5070.<sup>25</sup> This counter-action, in the middle of Operation Parakram, showed how different provocations were perceived by New Delhi. As the model of coercive diplomacy states, a coercer's demands are perceived as being more legitimate when they are a response to the target's outright territorial occupation than as a response to the target's covert support to terrorist activity.<sup>26</sup>

While a clear territorial incursion on the lines of Kargil had to be met with an immediate military response, there was no obvious response to the Parliament attack as there was no clear target which could be struck without the threat of unacceptable

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<sup>25</sup> Praveen Swami, 'When Pakistan took Loonda Post,' *Frontline*, August 31-September 13, 2002, Vol. 19, Issue 18.

<sup>26</sup> Alexander L. George & William E. Simons, 'Findings and Conclusions,' in Alexander L. George & William E. Simons (eds.) *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, (Boulder, Co: Westview Press, 1994), pg. 272.

retaliation. Ironically, occupation of posts in Kargil by Pakistani troops was hardly of the same symbolic importance as the attack on Parliament, the heart of Indian democracy. The type of provocation highlights an important issue in India's varying responses. Defensive escalation (i.e., escalating conventionally when there is a territorial incursion) was acceptable to the government but there was ambiguity over the effectiveness of offensive escalation (taking the fight to the adversary's territory).

Similarly, perceptions within Pakistan also help explain the mentality that led to resistance to any sort of Indian coercion. According to the broader Pakistani image of India, the majority Hindu country has not accepted the reality of a Muslim state, and this leads to frequent communal riots targeting Muslims as well as its refusal to let go of Kashmir.<sup>27</sup> Kashmir is thus seen among the wider populace as a vital national interest.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, in the immediate post-9/11 period, the Musharraf regime assumed that if it refused support to Washington in its campaign in Afghanistan, India would take the lead and consolidate its relationship with the U.S. at the expense of Pakistan.

Further, while ending support for the Taliban could somehow be justified to the public, ending support to Kashmiri militant and separatist groups would not be condoned, especially by the powerful Islamic parties and the military, the single most powerful entity in Pakistan's polity. Therefore, after 9/11, Islamabad tried to prevent the international community from acting on their increasing suspicions that Kashmiri militants were from the same broad terror network which gave rise to the Taliban and Al Qaeda.<sup>29</sup> If the international community reached this analytical conclusion, then the pressure on Pakistan to desist from supporting the Kashmiri militancy would only intensify.

More specifically, in context of the Parliament attack, senior Pakistani military officials were convinced (at least outwardly so) that the incident was stage-managed by the Indian government in order to persuade the international community to pressurize Pakistan.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, the Indian government was convinced that the attack was

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<sup>27</sup> For an explanation of this view see, Feroze Hassan Khan, 'Comparative Strategic Culture: The Case of Pakistan,' *Strategic Insights*, Vol. IV, Issue 10 (October 2005), and Samina Yasmeen, 'Pakistan's Kashmir Policy: Voices of Moderation,' *Contemporary South Asia*, (2003) 12(2), pp. 188-189.

<sup>28</sup> Pamela Constable, 'Pakistanis Seeking Tradeoff on Kashmir,' *The Washington Post*, September 29, 2001, and Edward Cody, 'Defining Terrorism Tricky for Pakistan,' *The Washington Post*, January 7, 2002.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Steve Coll, 'The Stand-off,' *The New Yorker*, February 13, 2006.

approved by the highest levels of the Musharraf regime, and Indian Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani (also the Home Minister) told U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney that, “a dog can’t cross the Line of Control without being confronted by at least three layers of Pakistani security.”<sup>31</sup>

Regarding India’s intentions, Pakistani policymakers and experts were also convinced that New Delhi assumed from the limited nature of the Kargil conflict (1999) that a limited war could be fought without fear of escalation in the subcontinent.<sup>32</sup> Thus, there was a desire to dispel India’s perceived conclusion that Pakistan would not escalate from a limited conventional level. Therefore, as subsequent sections on objectives and threat credibility show, Pakistan signaled its willingness to escalate to a nuclear level through missile tests as well as explicit statements.

In the event, crucial impacting factors were not just perceptions that India and Pakistan had of each other, but also the need to manipulate perceptions of the international community. Perceptions of one’s national interest, reputation, and perceptions of the adversary formed the basis of Indian objectives and demands as well as Pakistan’s responses to these demands. Manipulation of international perceptions would impact on the way that the U.S. and other major powers intervened in the crisis.

## Implications:

### **How did perceptions impact on coercive diplomacy?**

Perceptions of the adversary’s intentions as well as of oneself impact on coercive diplomacy by helping frame the kind of objectives that the coercer puts forth as well as the response of the target state. In this case, Indian self-perceptions were of a weak state and that in the post-9/11 period, decisive action needed to be taken. This is especially so because while U.S. policymakers forced the Musharraf regime to cooperate in fighting the Taliban, Washington did not want to get involved in the Kashmir issue. In the words of a senior adviser to U.S. ambassador to India, Robert Blackwill, “we did not treat it as part of

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Zulfqar Khan, ‘Pakistan-India Military Standoff: A Nuclear Dimensions,’ *IPRI Journal*, Islamabad Policy Research Institute, Winter 2003.

the global war on terrorism.”<sup>33</sup> Further, U.S. policymakers also believed that Musharraf was the ‘best bet’ for India because of his relatively moderate views; New Delhi was highly skeptical of this approach.<sup>34</sup>

Therefore, if New Delhi had not reacted in a forceful manner, the initial separation of the Kashmiri militancy from the Al Qaeda-Taliban variety would have continued leading to the isolation of India on this issue. Indeed, in the days after 9/11, the fear among the Indian intelligentsia and policy circles was that because of Washington’s immediate post-9/11 requirements, it would once again tilt decisively in favor of Islamabad. In the words of one influential Indian commentator, Kanti Bajpai, the Indian perception was that “the U.S. has sold India down the Indus.”<sup>35</sup>

### **Did the process of coercive diplomacy proceed in accordance with these perceptions?**

Yes, as the subsequent sections demonstrate, India’s desire to change its self-perception of a weak state and to take some decisive steps encouraged the government in New Delhi to put forth very high objectives in pursuit of its coercive policy. Throughout the Kashmir militancy, the Indian government had never taken action across the Line of Control (LoC) into Pakistani territory where terror camps were based. Even during the Kargil conflict, New Delhi did not cross the border even though that meant even more casualties among Indian troops. Thus, by signaling its willingness to take military action across the border, New Delhi sought to remove perceptions of a ‘soft state.’

But in order to bring about this paradigmatic change in its status in the region as well as to take decisive measures to end militancy and terrorism in India, the resulting objectives were very high and extremely elaborate. The only way ‘self-perceptions’ of a weak state would have been removed was through an obvious political victory over Pakistan, such as through surrender of wanted Kashmiri and Punjabi militants and a demonstrated end of terror camps.

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<sup>33</sup> Steve Coll, ‘The Stand-off.’

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Kanti Bajpai, ‘India-US ties after September 11,’ *The Hindu*, September 22, 2001, <http://www.hinduonnet.com/2001/09/22/stories/05222523.htm>



### **Did the coercer (and target) take into account cultural characteristics of each other ?**

For both India and Pakistan, the negative view of each other was couched in religious terms which reinforced hard-line perceptions. From the Pakistani perspective, India followed an expansionist policy based on the Hindu nationalist concept of *Akhand Bharat* (greater India), which included the colonial territories present-day Pakistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar.<sup>36</sup> The fact that a Hindu nationalist-led coalition government was in power in New Delhi only reinforced this belief. Thus, Pakistani observers also saw Parakram in broader terms – as part of India's eventual objective of subduing Pakistan.

In both Indian and Pakistani perceptions, the adversary's mindset displayed a considerable element of irrationality. For India, the increase in suicide attacks by *fedayeen* since 1999-2000,<sup>37</sup> showed the increase in the perceived irrationality of militant groups, which could only be met with a firm response. Similarly, according to Pakistani experts, the higher levels of the Musharraf regime regarded Hindu nationalist leaders in the New Delhi government as irrational. Therefore, with such expectations of irrationality on the part of the adversary, it was safer for decision-makers on both sides to take hard-line positions – In the Indian case, it meant a higher magnitude of objectives, while in the Pakistani case it led to a refusal to back down.

## **INDIAN OBJECTIVES AND DEMANDS**

This section examines the Indian government's objectives and sees how the demands made in pursuit of these objectives impacted on coercive diplomacy. New Delhi's objectives can be grouped into two groups – explicit and implicit objectives. Explicit objectives are those that were stated in public and communicated to the target state. Implicit objectives are those that were not unambiguously declared but are understood as being part of the agenda.

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<sup>36</sup> Noor ul Haq, 'Pakistan and the Indian Quest for Hegemony 1947-2003,' *IPRI Journal*, Islamabad Policy Research Institute, Summer 2003.

<sup>37</sup> Jim Teeple, 'Pakistan/Kashmiri Separatists,' Voice of America, transcript, February 15, 2000, <http://fas.org/news/pakistan/2000/000215-pak1.htm>; and Anthony Davis, 'A New Kind of War,' *Asiaweek*, April 7, 2000, Vol. 26, No. 13.

## Explicit Objectives/Demands

The Indian government's coercive strategy in the wake of the Parliament attack was employed on two levels – political/diplomatic and military. That the objective was to take a decisive step in the decade long violence related to Kashmir was clear from the public pronouncements of the Indian political leadership. Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee called it an attack on the entire nation, and Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani resolved that India would eliminate terrorists wherever they were. Addressing the nation, Vajpayee stated that the “battle against terrorism had reached its final phase,” while the heads of security agencies told the Cabinet Committee on Security that it was time for ‘unconventional’ and ‘tougher’ security methods.<sup>38</sup>

The Parliament attack was thus seen as the last straw in a series of escalating insurgent and terrorist violence in Kashmir and the rest of India. This incident came two months after a suicide attack by Jaish-e-Mohammed on the Kashmir state assembly that killed over thirty people.<sup>39</sup> According to one influential Indian analyst, New Delhi's military mobilization was ‘fundamentally an attempt to get out of the box’ in order to emphasize to Islamabad that it (India) had military options at hand.<sup>40</sup> This has to be seen in context of the previous decade and a half in which Pakistan acquired nuclear weapons, and because of this strategic parity was able to foment militancy in Kashmir, in the process ‘boxing’ in any conventional military options that India might have had. This was in stark contrast to each of the previous conflicts when militant activities by Pakistan-backed insurgents was met by conventional offensives by India – 1947-48, 1965 and on the eastern frontier in 1971.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Ranjit Bhushan, ‘Shock Therapy,’ *Outlook*, December 24, 2001.

<sup>39</sup> Jaish-e-Mohammed initially claimed responsibility for the attack, but retracted its statement later, probably on instructions from the Musharraf regime; see Celia W. Dugger, ‘India shells Kashmir area, imperiling delicate balance,’ *The New York Times*, October 15, 2001.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with C. Raja Mohan, July 2005, New Delhi. Raja Mohan is a member of the National Security Advisory Board and strategic affairs editor of *The Indian Express*. During Operation Parakram, he was strategic affairs editor of *The Hindu*.

<sup>41</sup> The reason I don't include Kargil is because that skirmish was a localized intrusion while in two of the other conflicts (1947-48, 1965) there was a more aggressive attempt to either capture the Kashmir Valley or cut off the state from the rest of India. In the third (1971), the two million Bangladeshi refugees pouring into India created an untenable situation. As it is, in that case, India backed the Mukti Bahini, the anti-Pakistan East Bengal insurgent movement. Therefore, it was just a matter of time before India invaded East Pakistan.

In the wake of the Dec. 13 attack, New Delhi took several symbolic and substantial political and diplomatic steps to impress upon Pakistan and the international community its resolve to take decisive steps to end the decade long violence in Kashmir once and for all. The government recalled the High Commissioner to Pakistan, Vijay Nambiar, and his counterpart in India, Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, was asked to return home. Indian diplomatic representation in Pakistan was cut in half by New Delhi. Pakistani planes were banned from over-flying or entering Indian airspace and transportation links between the two countries were snapped. Two symbols of the limited cooperation between the countries were the Samjhauta (Reconciliation) Express, a train service launched in 1999, and the Lahore to Delhi bus service. The Indian government ended both. India also demanded from Pakistan that it hand over 20 people accused of various acts of terrorism over the years. These included Dawood Ibrahim, the alleged mastermind of the 1993 Bombay blasts in which hundreds of people were killed.

New Delhi further demanded that (i) Islamabad end its support for all terrorist groups in Pakistan and POK that were operating against India, (ii) that it should also ban such groups and (iii) that it take action against individuals involved in terrorist activities.<sup>42</sup> To maintain its hard-line position, India rejected Pakistan's offer of a joint investigation into the attack on the Parliament.<sup>43</sup> The Musharraf regime rejected India's demands, setting the stage for the 10-month stalemate.

While President Musharraf offered an immediate condemnation for the attack,<sup>44</sup> senior Pakistani officials alleged that this incident had been staged by New Delhi to embarrass Islamabad and mobilize the international community against Pakistan.<sup>45</sup> In fact, Pakistani police officials, in a counter-demand in late January 2002, publicized a police First Information Report in Karachi in September 1947 because it named L.K. Advani (Indian Deputy Prime Minister, who was then a Karachi activist of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh – RSS – the parent body of the BJP) in a conspiracy to kill M.A. Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan. This equivalency of demands was extended further by Islamabad in May after the Kaluchak massacre when the Interior Minister stated the

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<sup>42</sup> V. Sudarshan, 'Talk The Talk, Walk The Walk,' *Outlook*, January 21, 2002.

<sup>43</sup> V. Sudarshan, 'It's War, Put Diplomatically,' *Outlook*, December 31, 2001.

<sup>44</sup> Alexander Evans, 'India, Pakistan, and the Prospect of War,' *Current History*, April 2002, pg. 160.

<sup>45</sup> Amir Mir, 'An Indian Conspiracy,' *Outlook*, December 24, 2001.

government there had prepared a list of 32 ‘wanted elements’ who they would demand from India when talks between the two countries were resumed.<sup>46</sup>

Pakistan’s response to Indian allegations was that it had no hand in the December attack. The view was that even if Pakistan-based organizations conducted the attack, they were operating outside the control of the government, but they opposed it (the Musharraf regime) for supporting the United States in Afghanistan.<sup>47</sup> In response to the list of 20 people that India wanted handed over, Musharraf said that those who were Pakistani citizens would not be handed over, while the cases of the others would be examined.<sup>48</sup> The fact that the most of the 20 people held Pakistani citizenship meant that India’s demand would remain unfulfilled.

The major Pakistani concession came in the form of two speeches by General Musharraf in which he pledged that his country would not be used as a launching-pad for terrorism in Kashmir. Both speeches came after strong pressure from the U.S. to make some positive steps in response to India’s military mobilization. In the first speech, a televised address to the nation in January 2002, Musharraf announced a ban on the Lashkar-e-Toiba and the Jaish-e-Mohammed, two of the main militant groups operating in Kashmir. He also announced that terrorism had no place in the Kashmiri struggle.<sup>49</sup>

In the second speech in June 2002, made in the aftermath of the Kaluchak massacre, he repeated this pledge. But fundamental support for the Kashmiri cause remained and as later sections show, militant violence and infiltration continued unabated. It was clear that these speeches were a temporary palliative. Even after the second speech, Musharraf, in context of permanent end to infiltration, said, “I’m not going to give you an assurance that for years nothing will happen.”<sup>50</sup>

Nevertheless, this was accepted by New Delhi along with a secret clause in the pledge – that India would have to begin talks with Pakistan on all matters of dispute,

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<sup>46</sup> ‘Pak lists ‘wanted’ men from India,’ *The Tribune*, May 31, 2002.

<sup>47</sup> Brigadier Feroz Hassan Khan, ‘Pakistan’s Challenges and the Need for a Balanced Solution,’ *Strategic Insight: South Asia*, August 2002, The Brookings Institution, <http://www.brook.edu/views/articles/fellows/khan20020801.htm>

<sup>48</sup> B. Muralidhar Reddy, ‘Talking Tough,’ *Frontline*, January 19 – February 1, 2002, Vol. 19, Issue 2.

<sup>49</sup> Kamal Siddiqi, ‘Kashmir safety net, General takes bold leap in the dark,’ *The Indian Express*, January 13, 2002.

<sup>50</sup> Karl Vick & Kamran Khan, ‘Pakistani Ambivalence Frustrates Hope for Kashmir Peace,’ *The Washington Post*, June 29, 2002.

including Kashmir.<sup>51</sup> New Delhi would not have accepted such a condition publicly, especially after the Kaluchak massacre,<sup>52</sup> in which families of soldiers serving in Kashmir were killed. Musharraf later disowned his regime's commitment,<sup>53</sup> but the immediate objective of defusing the May crisis without a loss of face for either party was achieved.

India's initial set of demands to Pakistan betrayed a rigidity that ensured Islamabad would not concede. The Pakistani political-military establishment had a lot more at stake in not conceding to the demands than India had in successful coercion. Since the late 1980s, Pakistan's national interest as formulated by its political and military establishment was threefold: (a) developing a credible nuclear deterrent, (b) ending Indian rule in Kashmir, and (c) maintaining strategic depth in Afghanistan.<sup>54</sup>

It was one thing for Pakistan to reverse its support for the Taliban, quite another to do the same in Kashmir. Ending support for the Kashmiri separatist movement would be disastrous for any regime in Islamabad, let alone a military dictatorship. Domestic support within Pakistan for the Kashmir cause was considerable.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, if there had been any major changes in Kashmir policy, it would have been seen as capitulation to external pressure, as the Indian military amassed on Pakistan's eastern borders.<sup>56</sup>

Furthermore, according to Indian intelligence officials, in the months after 9/11, Musharraf could not have allowed the escaping Taliban militants to remain in Pakistan; they had to be sent to Indian Kashmir because they would have fomented internal instability in Pakistan.<sup>57</sup> Thus, even if India did not intend it, Parakram was inadvertently an exercise of 'type c' coercive diplomacy, which covers regime change in the target

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<sup>51</sup> Maj-Gen. Ashok Mehta (retd.) 'Operation Parakram,' *The Tribune*, August 13, 2005, <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2005/20050813/edit.htm#4>.

<sup>52</sup> According to the then Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh's memoirs, after this attack, "the Army boiled with revengeful anger and was (almost rebelliously) bent upon retaliation;" quoted in Siddharth Varadarajan, 'Not exactly total recall,' *The Hindu*, July 25, 2006.

<sup>53</sup> Maj-Gen. Ashok Mehta (retd.) 'Operation Parakram.'

<sup>54</sup> Husain Haqqani, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military*, (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005), pg. 262.

<sup>55</sup> Amir Mir, 'The Importance of Being Earnest,' *Outlook*, January 21, 2002, <http://www.outlookindia.com/full.asp?fodname=20020121&fname=Cover+Story&sid=4>

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Seymour M. Hersh, 'The Getaway,' *The New Yorker*, January 28, 2002, [http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/articles/020128fa\\_FACT](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/articles/020128fa_FACT)

state.<sup>58</sup> If Musharraf had conceded to the demands, internal opposition would have escalated, threatening his hold on power.

Thus, Kashmir remained a primary national interest. In fact, in an attempt to justify his country's alliance with the U.S. against the Taliban in September 2001, Musharraf explained to the Pakistani people that this step was taken to protect 'the Kashmir cause' in the hope that a tradeoff could be effected in which the Taliban (and with it Islamabad's strategic depth in Afghanistan) would be sacrificed in favor of the Kashmiri militancy.<sup>59</sup> This has been recognized by some Indian military analysts, who stated that to maintain some stability in Pakistan, Musharraf needed to allow Kashmiri militancy as a 'trade-off with the jihadis.'<sup>60</sup>

According to one Pakistani analyst, speaking after 9/11, "Musharraf has a majority of popular support now, but he will face enormous internal opposition if going against Afghanistan also means the end of Pakistan's Kashmir policy."<sup>61</sup> At most, the only substantial changes that could come about would be a relocation of *jehadi* organizations to Pakistan Occupied Kashmir accompanied by an expulsion of non-Kashmiris from the movement. But a complete reversal of the support for the Kashmiri cause would be termed a betrayal by the Pakistani populace and a humiliating capitulation to India.<sup>62</sup>

Further, Islamabad's retention of the Kashmiri militancy option has not just been a lever against India but also a vital cog in Pakistan's offense-defense strategy. In the 1947-48 and 1965 wars, key elements on the Pakistani side included irregulars and tribesmen who were sent into Kashmir to provoke the local populace. Given the close connections between Kashmiri militant groups and the military establishment there, any war with India would include action by militant groups. During Parakram, one senior Pakistani military

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<sup>58</sup> Here it must also be stated that any coercer has to make a decision on what kind of decision-maker it would prefer to deal with in the target state. Historically, the Indian government has dealt with military rulers in Pakistan and has not insisted on a democratic leadership there. Therefore, in this case, India's refusal to consider type C coercive diplomacy was partly because of Musharraf's precarious domestic position, but because an influential opinion within Indian policymakers is that only a military leader in Pakistan can carry through and implement any long-lasting settlement between the two countries. In fact, in August 2001, Prime Minister Vajpayee had hosted President Musharraf at a peace summit in Agra, during which the two sides tried in vain to reach a common ground on the Kashmir issue.

<sup>59</sup> Pamela Constable, 'Pakistanis Seeking Tradeoff on Kashmir.'

<sup>60</sup> See for example, V.R. Raghavan, 'Kashmir, the U.S. and Pakistan,' *The Hindu*, August 20, 2002.

<sup>61</sup> Rifaat Hussain, professor of strategic and defense studies, Quaid-i-azam University, Islamabad, quoted in Constable, 'Pakistanis Seeking Tradeoff on Kashmir.'

<sup>62</sup> Najam Sethi, 'Diminishing Returns for Flexing Muscle,' *The Friday Times*, January 2002.

officer, talking about the militant groups, said “What army in the world can wage war when it is being attacked by its own people from right, left, center and the back? Once the hostilities break out, can anyone perceive any other scenario for the Indian army in Kashmir?”<sup>63</sup>

Thus, while the demands made by India were clear, they suffered in two crucial ways. To create a favorable asymmetry of motivation (i.e., the motivation of the coercer is higher than the target), the coercer should (a) make demands that are concerned only with its own vital interests, and do not contradict the fundamental national interests of the adversary, and (b) offer carrots/concessions to the adversary.<sup>64</sup> India’s demands did not satisfy either of these conditions. The demands struck at the root of Pakistan’s national interests and objectives and were so specific that there was no room for ambiguity in a settlement, which might have given Islamabad room to maneuver for its domestic audience. Surrender of any militants wanted by India would have been a very visible defeat for the Musharraf regime, especially in front of a hostile domestic audience.

The way New Delhi’s initial demands had been structured ruled out any concessions (or carrots) that could be offered to soften demands. According to Pakistani analysts speaking during the crisis, in order to defuse tensions, New Delhi needed to accept direct talks on Kashmir.<sup>65</sup> The Indian government however, stated at the outset of the crisis, that peace talks would begin only when infiltration of militants ended, and when Pakistan had dismantled the terror-support network. Even these potential talks were unlikely to center on the status of Kashmir, as India had repeatedly asserted that this issue was not up for debate as Kashmir was an integral part of India. During Parakram, India also rejected proposals from Pakistan for joint patrolling of the LOC to keep a check on infiltration. This was a significant confidence building measure that could have fulfilled the ‘carrot’ element of coercive diplomacy. Other proposals from Pakistan, such as a joint statement to disallow their territories for cross-border terrorism, were also turned down, in a bid to project a hard-line, resolute, stance.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Karl Vick & Kamran Khan, ‘Pakistani Ambivalence Frustrates Hope for Kashmir Peace.’

<sup>64</sup> Alexander L. George & William E. Simons, ‘Findings and Conclusions,’ pg. 281.

<sup>65</sup> Karl Vick & Kamran Khan, ‘Pakistani Ambivalence Frustrates Hope for Kashmir Peace.’

<sup>66</sup> Atul Aneja, ‘India ‘no’ to Pak. Proposal,’ *The Hindu*, March 12, 2002.

## Implicit Objectives

New Delhi's implicit objective was conditioned by the events of 9/11,<sup>67</sup> and it centered around bringing the U.S. and the rest of the international community on its side on the Kashmir dispute and the accompanying militancy. It saw itself in a favorable position to take advantage of the renewed international efforts against terrorism. The Indian government portrayed its own fight against militancy in Kashmir as part of the global war on terrorism and used the presence of Al Qaeda-related groups in Pakistan to support its case. Pakistan's official backing for these militant groups was supposed to have been the clinching indictment.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, at one tense point after the May 2002 Kaluchak massacre, New Delhi also stated that Al Qaeda was present in Kashmir, a statement with which U.S. Defense Secretary Rumsfeld concurred.<sup>69</sup>

In the period before 9/11, Washington had begun to understand the benefits of closer ties with India, now that the Cold War was over and the U.S. did not require Islamabad's assistance in combating Soviet influence in Southwest Asia. India's large economic market and growing regional role were slowly coming into prominence. As one author put it, the increasingly cooperative relationship with the U.S. was lead by convergence in geo-strategic, economic, and political interests between the two sides.<sup>70</sup> Democracy, the biggest common factor, offered a stark contrast with Pakistan, which was highlighted when President Clinton arrived in India for a highly successful trip in March 2000, but merely stopped for a few hours in Islamabad on the way back.

After 9/11, Washington needed Pakistan's assistance once again, this time to combat Al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan. Pakistan offered the U.S. military bases, logistical support, and military intelligence, in return for which the U.S. softened sanctions

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<sup>67</sup> Gaurav Kampani, 'India's Compellence Strategy: Calling Pakistan's Nuclear Bluff Over Kashmir,' Monterey Institute for International Studies, June 10, 2002; <http://cns.miis.edu/pubs/week/020610.htm>.

<sup>68</sup> In December 2003, former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto admitted that the militancy in Kashmir was launched by the Pakistani politico-military leadership in 1989, probably the first official Pakistani confirmation of this long held suspicion; see 'Benazir admits that proxy war was a conscious decision,' *The Hindustan Times*, December 13, 2003, <http://www.jammu-kashmir.com/archives/archives2003/kashmir20031213c.html>

<sup>69</sup> Rahul Bedi, 'Al-Qa'eda are in Kashmir, says Rumsfeld,' *The Telegraph*, June 13, 2002, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2002/06/13/wkash13.xml>

<sup>70</sup> Kanti Bajpai, 'India-US Foreign Policy Concerns: Cooperation and Conflict,' in Gary K. Bertsch, Seema Gahlaut and Anupam Srivastava (eds.) *Engaging India*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 1999), pp. 196-201.



and provided Islamabad with \$1 billion in aid while facilitating other financial settlements with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.<sup>71</sup> In effect, this was a throwback to the 1980s when U.S. military ties with Pakistan impacted on India's strategic interests. The concern in New Delhi after 9/11 was that Pakistan would be able to leverage its role in Afghanistan into an advantageous position on the Kashmir issue.<sup>72</sup> And indeed, an indication of this was Secretary of State Colin Powell's statement in Pakistan in October 2001, in which he said that Washington had a "desire to accommodate the aspirations of the Kashmiri people."<sup>73</sup>

While such statements had been made in the past, given the circumstances, this was perceived as a major U.S. tilt toward Pakistan. Indian policymakers felt that New Delhi's importance to the U.S. had decreased because of the prominence of Washington's counter-terrorism objectives. Thus the period before the December 13 attack was one in which New Delhi tried to establish itself as an integral participant in the war against global terrorism, and part of this endeavor was to ensure that Washington did not side with Islamabad on Kashmir.

After the December 13 attack, India established Operation Parakram not as a regionally isolated exercise, but as one part of the broader campaign against terror precipitated by the September 11 attack. This assertion continued throughout the deployment. Following the Bali bombing in October 2002, Prime Minister Vajpayee stated that the incident was a reminder of the extremists' threat, and that the international community had to combat terror in a united manner as all acts of terror were equally dangerous.<sup>74</sup>

To mobilize the international community's support, New Delhi also cited UN Security Council Resolution 1373, which was adopted after 9/11. This resolution committed states to neutralize logistical networks of terror groups and also to refrain from supporting terrorist networks in any way. This argument was accepted by British Prime

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<sup>71</sup> Samina Ahmed, 'The United States and Terrorism in Southwest Asia,' *International Security*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (Winter 2001/02), pp. 84-85.

<sup>72</sup> Edward Luce & Khozem Merchant, 'A Balancing Act,' *The Financial Times*, October 12, 2001.

<sup>73</sup> Alan Sipress & Rajiv Chandrasekaran, 'Pakistan Confirms its Support of U.S.' *The Washington Post*, October 17, 2001.

<sup>74</sup> Hasan Suroor, 'PM calls for 'united' fight against terror,' *The Hindu*, October 14, 2002.

Minister Tony Blair, and the British, in conjunction with the U.S., pressed Pakistan to shed its ambivalence in clamping down on India-specific militant outfits.<sup>75</sup>

One mechanism for achieving India's objectives was to convince the U.S. that New Delhi was serious in its threats to attack Pakistan. This would make the U.S. put pressure on Pakistan to concede to New Delhi's demands. This kind of indirect coercion or 'second-order' coercion requires that the coercer be able to shape the behavior of the third party in such a way that the latter is compelled, in turn, to coerce the target state.<sup>76</sup> In this case, New Delhi's escalatory policies and movement of offensive forces to the border were partly aimed at convincing the U.S. that the risk of war was high enough for Washington to intervene.

Thus, New Delhi's aim was not just to ensure that international support (a key coercive diplomacy variable favoring success) was in its favor, but to actively manipulate this support to coerce Pakistan. If Pakistan still did not agree to reverse its support for terrorism, then an Indian attack would be condoned.<sup>77</sup> During the two main phases of tensions (January and May), senior Indian government and military officials made declarations that they were ready to take aggressive action.<sup>78</sup> These postures immediately led to proactive U.S. activity in the subcontinent, marked by shuttle diplomacy by senior U.S. government functionaries. U.S. ambassador to India, Robert Blackwill recommended to the State Department that even if there was a one percent chance of a nuclear confrontation in a war between India and Pakistan, the U.S. could not afford to take that risk.<sup>79</sup> (This phase is described in the section on international strategic environment.)

Other indicators also suggested that at least in May (after the Kaluchak massacre), the Indian government was serious about taking military action. The U.S. shifted its diplomatic personnel and their families out of New Delhi. An Indian military officer also stated that India had assured the U.S. that it would try to avoid American bases at Jacobabad, Pasni, and Dalbandin in Pakistan, and simultaneously Washington had started

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<sup>75</sup> V. Sudarshan, 'Talk the talk, walk the walk,' *Outlook*, January 21, 2002.

<sup>76</sup> Daniel Byman and Matthew Waxman, *The Dynamics of Coercion*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 82-83.

<sup>77</sup> Polly Nayak, 'Reducing Collateral Damage to Indo-Pakistani Relations from the War on Terrorism,' Brookings Institution Policy Brief # 107, pg. 2.

<sup>78</sup> See for example, 'Kaluchak strike: Govt. under pressure to act,' *The Tribune*, May 17, 2002.

<sup>79</sup> Maj-Gen. Ashok Mehta (ret'd.) 'Operation Parakram,' *The Tribune*, August 13, 2005,

to move its personnel out of Pakistan while formulating contingency plans for an emergency evacuation.<sup>80</sup> In fact, one influential Indian expert claimed in an interview that at one point, the U.S. was so convinced that India would attack that it provided maps of Jacobabad air base to New Delhi, so that it could avoid hitting U.S. personnel and installations.<sup>81</sup> However, this claim could not be confirmed by independent sources.

Therefore, while India's threats were aimed at Islamabad, they were also meant to signal to Washington that unless the international community pressurized Islamabad to clamp down on militancy, war would be inevitable. To a large extent the Bush administration did exactly this. Washington announced that the two outfits blamed by India for the attack, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed, would be placed on its list of banned terrorist groups.<sup>82</sup> On at least one occasion, in March 2002, the U.S. also asked Pakistan to hand over the 20 wanted militants to India, though this approach remained a non-starter.<sup>83</sup> U.S. pressure led to the two speeches by Musharraf (January and May 2002) in which he renounced cross-border terrorism.

When tension increased after the Kaluchak massacre, Washington was again convinced of the seriousness of India's threats and it pressurized Pakistan to accept New Delhi's specific objective in May 2002 – a guarantee from Musharraf that Pakistan would end cross-border terrorism – conveyed by Indian National Security Advisor Brajesh Mishra to his U.S. counterpart.<sup>84</sup> This demand was accepted by Musharraf, though the pledge was made public not by Islamabad but by the U.S. State department.<sup>85</sup>

In the broader scheme of Indo-U.S. relations, this crisis was a landmark in ties between the two countries because India allowed the U.S. an active role in defusing the situation.<sup>86</sup> For years the mantra in New Delhi was that Kashmir was a bilateral issue and other powers had no role in it. But 9/11 brought with it an increased focus on the threat from radical Islamic terrorist groups. With such changes in global perceptions, New Delhi

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<sup>80</sup> Rahul Bedi, 'The military dynamics,' *Frontline*, Vol. 19, Issue 12, June 8-21, 2002.

<sup>81</sup> Interview in New Delhi, June 2005.

<sup>82</sup> Alexander Evans, 'India, Pakistan, and the Prospect of War,' *Current History*, April 2002, pg. 161.

<sup>83</sup> 'Hand over 20 terrorists to India: U.S.,' *The Hindu*, March 23, 2002.

<sup>84</sup> Maj-Gen. Ashok Mehta, 'Operation Parakram.'

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Stephen P. Cohen, 'South Asia,' in Richard Ellings & Aaron Friedberg (ed), *Strategic Asia 2002-03: Asian Aftershocks*, (Seattle, WN: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2002), pg. 296.

could now internationalize the Kashmir issue in its favor, and Washington's pressure on Pakistan demonstrated the success of this objective. Even U.S. attempts to balance its relations between the two states was a reflection of its concern with the campaign in Afghanistan as well as the threat of nuclear war, rather than any fundamental policy difference with India over Kashmir and terrorism.

India's objectives were also shaped by the power struggle in Afghanistan. Historically, New Delhi had supported the Northern Alliance against the Pakistan-backed Taliban. In the initial stages of U.S. combat in Afghanistan, the impression given by Washington was that moderate elements of the Taliban would be allowed into the new government in Kabul. This was opposed by India,<sup>87</sup> which wanted a friendly regime in Kabul that would take some of the pressure off the Kashmir sector. Therefore, in the pre-December 13, 2001 period, New Delhi sought to ensure that the strategic changes in its neighborhood did not contradict its own national interests.

The demands that New Delhi made on Pakistan were not necessarily based on a correct perception (or image) of the adversary. First, Pakistan's strategic culture is based on a mistrust of India (as is India's vis-à-vis Pakistan) and its intentions, especially regarding Kashmir. In fact one of the main reasons why Gen. Musharraf sided with the U.S. immediately after 9/11 was to ensure that India did not get the upper hand by becoming the main regional anti-terror ally of the U.S. In a televised speech on September 19, 2001, he explained his decision to side with the U.S. against the Taliban and Al Qaeda, saying that, "They (India) have readily offered all their bases, facilities, and logistic support to the United States... They want the United States to side with them and to declare Pakistan a terrorist state.... I only want to tell them in English: Lay off."<sup>88</sup>

This relatively hawkish position on Kashmir was also reflected in the general population, even a year after Parakram ended.<sup>89</sup> Furthermore, several members of the senior military leadership in Pakistan in late 2001 were hard-line Islamists who sympathized with the Taliban. Given the fragile nature of the military dictatorship, its motivation to resist Indian threats and demands only increased, and in the process tilted the

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<sup>87</sup> Alan Sipress & Rajiv Chandrasekraran, 'Pakistan Confirms its Support of U.S.'

<sup>88</sup> 'Text: Musharraf rallies Pakistan,' Text of speech, BBCNews.com, September 19, 2001, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/monitoring/media\\_reports/1553542.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/monitoring/media_reports/1553542.stm)

<sup>89</sup> Amir Mir, 'That Iron in the Soul,' *Outlook*, August 25, 2003.

asymmetry of interests in its favor. Thus India's choice of objectives impacted in the eventual conduct of Parakram. And while the U.S. did pressurize Pakistan it was constrained by regional security developments, which are examined in a later section.

## Implications:

### **What was the magnitude of objectives and how did this impact on the asymmetry of motivation/interests in coercive diplomacy?**

As reiterated earlier, the higher the demands and objectives of the coercer, the greater is at stake/interest for the target state and this increases its prospects of resistance. More importantly, if the demands strike at the very root of the target's identity and core national interests, the asymmetry of interests tilts in its favor because there is much more at stake now. In this episode the list of initial demands that New Delhi put to Islamabad betrayed a very high magnitude of objectives which struck at the heart of Pakistan's identity and national interests.

From the Pakistani perspective, if it had effectively ended its support for the Kashmiri militancy, it would have been the biggest change in its foreign policy and would have gone against extremely powerful institutions that supported the Kashmiri cause – the Pakistani military, political parties, and fundamentalist religious groups. Indeed, since the birth of the state of Pakistan, Kashmir provided the 'core rationale' for its existence and is a crucial element of the identity of the country.<sup>90</sup>

Furthermore, Pakistan had fought two wars over Kashmir (1947-48, 1965) as well as a localized conflict (Kargil, 1997), besides providing material and political support to militant outfits operating in the state. Thus, there was too much a stake for Pakistan to concede to India's demands. Additionally, the surrender of even a few of the 20 wanted militants to New Delhi would have been a very public capitulation to India, and this would have been the final straw for fundamentalist outfits and groups within the army that were dissatisfied over the reversal of Islamabad's support to the Taliban.

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<sup>90</sup> Stephen P. Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan*, (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2004), pgs. 55, 121.

**Did the objectives show any difference in the way the two sides viewed the demands as representing different variants of coercive diplomacy (Types A, B, or C)? In other words, did the coercive policy reflect different coercive diplomacy consequences for the two protagonists?**

If both sides view the demands as reflecting different CD variants (A, B, or C), it is crucial to the eventual result of coercion. Thus, India's demands ostensibly did not touch upon regime change in Islamabad and were restricted to Type B coercive diplomacy, in which the objective is to force the target state to undo a course of action. The objective was an end to all support by Pakistan to the Kashmiri militancy and surrender of wanted militants to India. But as stated in the previous question, the Kashmir issue was of supreme national interest to the Pakistani political, military and religious establishment, and had been so at least since the late 1980s.<sup>91</sup> Any capitulation on this would have been a fatal blow to the regime in Islamabad. As it happens, in the aftermath of 9/11 and Pakistan's policy change on the Taliban, Musharraf had removed several senior generals who supported the Taliban and other fundamentalist groups and opposed the move to the U.S. camp.<sup>92</sup> Thus, there already was considerable domestic opposition to Musharraf both within and outside his military clique, and he (Musharraf) was seeking to steadily remove these sources of threat to his regime. Conceding to Indian demands would once again have put the Pakistani ruler on the back-foot.

Therefore, from the Pakistani perspective, the high magnitude of Indian demands effectively meant that the Musharraf regime was facing Type C coercive diplomacy rather than Type B. the significance of this analytical point is that Type C regime change CD is much more difficult to achieve than Type B or Type A ('A' involves persuading a target not to begin an action. In Type C coercion, the stakes for the target are at the highest, i.e., from its perspective, its fundamental national interests are at stake. Therefore, the asymmetry of interests tilts in its favor, and thereby increasing its resolve to resist.

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<sup>91</sup> See for example Amelie Blom, 'The 'Multivocal State': The Policy of Pakistan on Kashmir,' Center for International Studies and Research, Paris, October 2000, <http://www.ceri-sciencespo.com/archive/octo00/artab.pdf>

<sup>92</sup> B. Raman, 'The Guilty men of 9/11,' Rediff.com, September 10, 2003, <http://www.rediff.com/news/2003/sep/10raman.htm>

In effect, Operation Parakram turned into Type C coercive diplomacy because of the eventual consequences of India's objectives. Importantly, the U.S. government also realized that Musharraf was the 'best bet' for dealing with India,<sup>93</sup> implying that any other figure in power would have a negative effect on both South Asian stability as well as the broader global campaign against terror.

#### **Did the coercer modify its objectives?**

As later sections demonstrate, New Delhi did eventually modify its objectives as Operation Parakram progressed. By focusing on other priorities and achievements in Kashmir (especially the September 2002 assembly elections), New Delhi was able to frame the issue differently. In this manner, even though the original demands were not fulfilled, these modified objectives were used to justify ending the standoff without a significant loss of face.

#### **Was there any clarity in settlement conditions?**

Clarity of settlement conditions help reassure the target that the concessions (or carrots) that it has been promised would be adhered to if it agrees to the coercer's demands. In formulating its demands, New Delhi did not provide any such reassurances regarding clarity of settlement conditions. Since the Indian position was that it would not negotiate with Pakistan or offer any future concessions till its demands were met, this removed any possibility of discussion of post-Operation Parakram confidence building measures. Thus, because there was no clarity of settlement conditions, it made Islamabad's resolve to resist, stronger.

#### **How did the type of provocation impact on coercive diplomacy?**

The type of provocation that provokes the coercer to launch such a policy is important because of the impact on international opinion. A clear violation of territory makes it easier to get the international community's support for coercive activity against the target. This is especially so in the case of mid-ranking powers such as India and Pakistan that depend to a large extent on great power support for their regional and global aspirations. On the other hand, if it is not abundantly clear who the perpetrator of the provocation is, international support is less obvious.

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<sup>93</sup> Steve Coll, 'The Stand-off.'

In this case, unlike the Kargil crisis, militants did not occupy any territory and therefore, international support (especially from the U.S.) was not automatic or unambiguous.<sup>94</sup> Nevertheless, eventually, the U.S. and other major powers did come round to India's position and pressurized Pakistan to make some concessions (resulting in the two speeches by Musharraf). But this support from the U.S. had less to do with a complete support for India's position and more to do with avoiding a conflict in South Asia. Such a conflict would potentially have had nuclear consequences as well as a grave impact on Washington's campaign against terror in Afghanistan.

Furthermore, because this was a terrorist attack and not territorial aggression, Pakistan was in a better position to claim plausible deniability. During and after the crisis, Pakistani experts and policymakers regularly denied any links to the Parliament attack and in fact, alleged that New Delhi staged this incident.<sup>95</sup> Through such a tactic, Islamabad was able to frame the issue differently so that New Delhi had to prove unambiguously that the attackers had a clear connection to official Pakistani agencies.

## **CREDIBILITY OF INDIAN THREATS**

Along with demands, coercive diplomacy also requires credible threats to force the adversary to concede. To establish credibility, the coercer should demonstrate that it is in a position to carry out threats. But two realities based on nuclear weapons compromised the credibility of India's threats. The first reality is that nuclear weapons and their delivery systems were present on both sides, at least since 1998.

Second, Pakistan's nuclear doctrine includes a first-use policy in the event that a conventional war goes against it. Furthermore, New Delhi's conventional capabilities also were not overwhelming enough to support the planned military strategies. This section first outlines the conditions of nuclear deterrence in the subcontinent. The next sub-section examines conventional capabilities and strategies to argue that even these were not as one-

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<sup>94</sup> See for example, Steve Coll, 'The Stand-off.'

<sup>95</sup> See for example, Noor ul Haq, 'Pakistan and the Indian Quest for Hegemony 1947-2003,' *IPRI Journal*, Islamabad Policy Research Institute, Summer 2003.



sided in India's favor as was generally assumed. What this suggests is that even if India had launched a conventional strike, its existing military posture could have been successfully countered by Pakistan's conventional forces, resulting in a military stalemate.

## Nuclear Deterrence

The resolution adopted by the Indian cabinet after the attack on Parliament called for the liquidation of "the terrorists and their sponsors wherever they are and whoever they are."<sup>96</sup> This signaled a willingness to cross the threshold to a conventional war in pursuit of terror groups. During this crisis, there was a feeling among a growing number of Indian policymakers and strategic thinkers that a limited conventional war could be waged without either side resorting to nuclear weapons. The belief was that Pakistan would not take the war to the nuclear level, simply because the consequences of a retaliatory strike would be too devastating.<sup>97</sup> Furthermore, Indian officials felt that they could restrict the war to levels that would ensure Pakistan wouldn't launch a nuclear strike.<sup>98</sup> The presence of U.S. forces in the region would also control the situation. Any conventional war between the two countries would be halted within a few days under intense pressure from the international community.<sup>99</sup>

However, statements by political and military leaders during the crisis, as well as the existing nuclear doctrines of the two countries created levels of uncertainty and danger in the subcontinent which obliged the international community to intervene. New Delhi tried to ensure that the situation did not get out of hand by framing the issue of war differently from Pakistan. Its strategy was to ignore nuclear threats by Pakistan, and avoid making such threats of its own, while ostensibly sticking to a conventional military buildup.<sup>100</sup> While the Pakistani leadership responded to India's military mobilization with periodic nuclear threats, India refused to do the same, barring a few exceptions. One such

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<sup>96</sup> Mark Tully, 'Vajpayee Under Pressure,' CNN, February 2, 2002, <http://www.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/asiapcf/south/12/14/india.vajpayee/>

<sup>97</sup> Peter Grier, 'A big test of nuclear deterrence,' *Christian Science Monitor*, January 4, 2002.

<sup>98</sup> Rajiv Chandrasekaran, 'For India, Deterrence May Not Prevent War,' *The Washington Post*, Jan. 17, 2002.

<sup>99</sup> K. Subramanyam, 'Indo-Pakistan Nuclear Conflict Unlikely,' *The Times of India*, January 2, 2002.

<sup>100</sup> Rahul Roy-Chaudhury, 'Nuclear Doctrine, Declaratory Policy, and Escalation Control,' in Michael Krepon, Rodney W. Jones, and Ziad Haider, (eds.) *Escalation Control and the Nuclear Option in South Asia*, (Washington, DC: Henry L. Stimson Center, 2004), pg. 104.

threat from Islamabad came in Gen. Musharraf's Pakistan Day speech in March 2002, in which he stated that a 'misadventure' by India would be met with a 'fitting response.'<sup>101</sup> Even after Parakram ended, he stated that even if one Indian soldier had crossed the border, Pakistan would have been ready to use nuclear weapons. In fact, he asserted that this message was relayed to Prime Minister Vajpayee via every foreign leader who came to Pakistan during the crisis.<sup>102</sup>

A second major statement by Musharraf came in April 2002 in the course of an interview with a German magazine, in which he said that as a last resort, if Pakistan's existence was threatened, it would use nuclear weapons.<sup>103</sup> On the other hand, the only prominent threat from the Indian political-military side came in January 2002 by army chief Gen. S. Padmanabhan who threatened a severe retaliatory strike against a first strike on India.<sup>104</sup> Significantly, Islamabad's threat to escalate to a general war (which would presumably have a low nuclear threshold) in the event of an Indian attack was recognized by decision-makers in New Delhi.<sup>105</sup>

But apart from threats and statements by leaders during Parakram, nuclear doctrines of the two sides created an additional level of uncertainty. This was regarded by the international community as extremely risky and dangerous, forcing it to intervene. India's no-first use policy restricts it from starting a nuclear exchange. This belief and the absence of any other options encouraged the biggest mobilization of forces in the western and northern sectors since the 1971 war. India's conventional superiority supported the view that it could achieve a clear, decisive victory. However, while India's strategy was to fight a conventional war (whether limited to Kashmir or not), Pakistan's strategy did not rule out the use of nuclear weapons, which are widely assumed to have a first-strike role in its military doctrine.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> B. Muralidhar Reddy, 'Will eradicate terrorism root and branch,' *The Hindu*, March 24, 2002.

<sup>102</sup> 'Musharraf hints he considered nuclear strike,' *The Washington Post*, December 31, 2002.

<sup>103</sup> Rahul Roy-Chaudhury, 'Nuclear Doctrine, Declaratory Policy, and Escalation Control,' pg. 106.

<sup>104</sup> 'From one general to another: We're ready,' *The Indian Express*, January 12, 2002.

<sup>105</sup> Sumit Ganguly & Michael R. Kraig, 'The 2001-2002 Indo-Pakistani Crisis: Exposing the Limits of Coercive Diplomacy,' *Security Studies*, 14, no. 2, April-June 2005, pg. 311.

<sup>106</sup> Smruti S. Pattanaik, 'Pakistan's Nuclear Strategy,' *Strategic Analysis*, January-March 2003, Vol. 27, No. 1, pg. 11.

According to Pakistani analysts, Islamabad's first-strike policy is meant to counter not just India's conventional superiority but also an Indian pre-emptive attack.<sup>107</sup> The implication is that India's no-first use policy is not necessarily trusted by Islamabad. In fact, it has rejected India's no-first use policy and the credible minimum deterrence on which it is based. Pakistan's response is that there is simply no credibility to India's 'no-first use' offer – If India really believed in the no-first use doctrine, then it would have taken seriously China's offer for the same.<sup>108</sup> For Islamabad, at least ostensibly, there was a threat that India would be the first to use nuclear weapons. American sources also suggested that India's no-first use posture was not taken very seriously, and that the danger of Pakistan escalating to the nuclear level was a more crucial issue for India.<sup>109</sup>

According to the Strategic Plans Division of the Pakistani government, four scenarios would lead to a first-strike by Pakistan.<sup>110</sup> These were: (a) India conquered a large part of Pakistani territory, including Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK); (b) a large proportion of the Pakistani armed forces were destroyed; (c) India forced Pakistan into political destabilization; and (d) India imposed an economic stranglehold on Pakistan.

The Indian nuclear doctrine is based on a policy of credible minimum deterrence and in the eventuality that deterrence fails, an effective retaliatory capability.<sup>111</sup> Threats to use nuclear weapons against India would provoke steps to counter these threats. The nuclear arsenal is sought to be based on a triad of aircraft, missiles, and sea-based delivery vehicles.<sup>112</sup> New Delhi has also sought to ensure that the threshold of both conventional and nuclear conflict is high, which would involve strengthening conventional military capabilities.<sup>113</sup>

In response to India's stated minimalist doctrine, Pakistani analysts have proposed that instead of getting into a quantitative competition over the arsenal, nuclear weapons

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<sup>107</sup> Nadeem Iqbal, 'Hiding behind a nuclear cloud,' *Asia Times*, January 11, 2002,

<http://www.atimes.com/ind-pak/DA11Df01.html>

<sup>108</sup> 'Indian Nuclear Doctrine,' Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram at the Conference on Disarmament, August 19, 1999, <http://www.fas.org/news/pakistan/1999/CD-20August99.htm>

<sup>109</sup> Email communication from Dr. Stephen P. Cohen, Brookings Institution, April 2005.

<sup>110</sup> Shaun Gregory, 'South Asia's Nuclear Brinkmanship,' BBC, May 29, 2002,

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/2013471.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/2013471.stm)

<sup>111</sup> 'Draft Report of National Security Advisory Board on Indian Nuclear Doctrine,' August 17, 1999,

[http://www.indianembassy.org/policy/CTBT/nuclear\\_doctrine\\_aug\\_17\\_1999.html](http://www.indianembassy.org/policy/CTBT/nuclear_doctrine_aug_17_1999.html)

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

should be integrated with its conventional strategy as part of a ‘one-rung escalation ladder.’<sup>114</sup> The long standing principles behind Pakistan’s nuclear policy are: (a) Pakistan should respond to nuclear threats through its own nuclear arsenal, (b) Nuclear weapons should make up for the skewed conventional balance in the subcontinent, and (c) Non-proliferation should be dealt with regionally.<sup>115</sup>

But apart from this, Pakistan’s nuclear policy and its first strike role is shrouded in ambiguity, which creates a level of uncertainty regarding its military responses. Command and control systems on both sides are not fully secure, and would potentially be vulnerable in a full-scale conventional war. In this context, uncertainty arises from the possibility that if Pakistan’s nuclear command and control systems are threatened, Islamabad might order the use of nuclear weapons.<sup>116</sup> Given the limited geographical distance between the two sides, they have only minutes to react to a suspected nuclear missile launch before it strikes. Further, conventional warfare between them would include air and ballistic missile attacks, either in support of armored and infantry forces, or in a strategic role. These are dual use systems and at least from the Pakistani perspective, can be assumed as pre-emptive strikes on nuclear assets.<sup>117</sup> Pakistan’s lack of a reliable second-strike capability, relative to India, owing to its limited strategic depth, further reinforces this uncertainty. Therefore, as one South Asia expert put it, “the key part about nuclear weapons in the South Asian context is uncertainty. No one can be sure what would trigger a nuclear response.”<sup>118</sup>

To further make the threats credible, both sides have adequate delivery systems in the form of fighter-bombers and missiles to deliver nuclear payloads.<sup>119</sup> In fact, to show their seriousness, they also test fired nuclear capable missiles during the deployment. Considering that Pakistan has problems accessing the latest aircraft and related supplies,

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<sup>114</sup> Shireen M. Mazari, ‘India’s nuclear doctrine in perspective and Pakistan’s options,’ *Defence Journal*, October 1999, <http://defencejournal.com/oct99/india-doctrine.htm>

<sup>115</sup> Farah Zahra, ‘Pakistan’s Road to a Minimum Nuclear Deterrent,’ *Arms Control Today*, July/August 1999.

<sup>116</sup> Peter R. Lavoy & Stephen A. Smith, ‘The Risk of Inadvertant Nuclear Use Between India and Pakistan,’ *Strategic Insights*, February 3, 2003.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Teresita Schaffer, CSIS, quoted in Bradley Graham and Thomas E. Ricks, ‘Military disparity adds to uncertainty,’ *The Washington Post*, June 1, 2002.

<sup>119</sup> For a comprehensive discussion of India’s nuclear delivery systems, see Ashley J. Tellis, *India’s Emerging Nuclear Posture* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2001), pp. 527-582.

the obvious choice for delivery systems was land-based missiles, which it positioned (Hatf I, II) soon after India began mobilizing. It possesses several missile systems that can be used in a nuclear role. The Hatf-III (Ghaznavi/M-11) has a range of 280 kilometers and can carry a payload of 500-800 kilograms, while the Hatf-V (Ghauri – I/No Dong) has a longer range of 1,300-1,500 kilometers, with a payload of 700 kilograms.<sup>120</sup> It also has the 2000 km range Ghauri – II.<sup>121</sup> Among the aircraft, it has the nuclear capable F-16, and some reports say that its fleet of A-5 C planes have the capability to drop battlefield nuclear weapons.<sup>122</sup>

India had only one deployed missile system – Prithvi I, a single stage, liquid-fuelled missile with a range of 150 kilometers which can carry a payload of 1000 kilograms.<sup>123</sup> Though this missile has been deployed, the problem of limited battlefield surveillance hampers the effective use of the missile at its full range, which could be problematic in a conflict with Pakistan.<sup>124</sup> To maintain threat credibility, India test fired its medium range nuclear capable Agni ballistic missile in January 2002. According to one expert, its range, 700 km, was highlighted by the Indian government, a clear reference that it was Pakistan-centric (China specific missiles have a longer range, at least 3,000 km).<sup>125</sup>

The other elements of the delivery mechanism are the nuclear capable aircraft in the Indian Air Force's inventory: MiG-27, MiG-29, Mirage 2000, Su-30, and Jaguar aircraft.<sup>126</sup> The air force's role in a nuclear conflict goes beyond delivering nuclear payloads; it also involves preventing Pakistan's nuclear-capable aircraft from successfully fulfilling their mission.<sup>127</sup> Given the number of strike aircraft available for delivering a nuclear payload, it would ostensibly seem that India has an adequate deterrent capability. According to one calculation, about 150 aircraft in the Indian Air Force (IAF) can be

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<sup>120</sup> 'Pakistan Nuclear Forces, 2002,' Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, <http://www.ceip.org/files/nonprolif/numbers/Pakistan.asp>

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> 'India Nuclear Forces 2002,' Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, <http://www.ceip.org/files/nonprolif/numbers/india.asp>

<sup>124</sup> See Rajesh Kadian, 'Nuclear Weapons and the Indian Armed Forces,' in D.R. SarDesai and Raju G.C. Thomas (eds.) *Nuclear India in the Twenty-First Century*, (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2002) pg. 222.

<sup>125</sup> Rahul Roy-Chaudhury, 'Nuclear Doctrine, Declaratory Policy, and Escalation Control,' pg. 107.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Eric Arnett, 'Conventional Arms Transfers and Nuclear Stability in South Asia,' in Eric Arnett (ed) *Nuclear Weapons and Arms Control in South Asia after the Test Ban*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pg. 75.

modified to make them nuclear capable, and even if two thirds of them were assumed to be destroyed in a first-strike, there would still be 50 left for retaliatory purposes.<sup>128</sup> However, these aircraft have qualitative problems that can reduce their reliability for carrying out a nuclear mission. They do not have the optimum combination of characteristics for an effective nuclear role, whether it is a load carrying capacity, operational radius, or defensive weaponry.<sup>129</sup> The fact remains that the different aircraft in the IAF are suited mainly for tactical strikes rather than for delivering nuclear weapons.

India's deterrence capability is also affected by command and control issues. New Delhi has established the National Command Authority (NCA) and the Strategic Forces Command (SFC) as part of an integrated nuclear command structure. But historically, the Indian armed forces have been kept separate from the Ministry of Defense, which has restricted their role in the decision-making process. Within the services, there is no single point authority to advise the political leadership, mainly due to the rivalry between the services over the post of Chief of Defense Staff. This has adversely affected the nuclear command and control apparatus.<sup>130</sup>

There are no confirmed figures on the size of the nuclear arsenals of the two countries. One recent estimate suggests that India has a stockpile of 30-35 devices, while Pakistan possesses 24-48 such weapons.<sup>131</sup> According to a U.S. government report, India can deploy a few nuclear weapons between a period of a few days to a week, while Pakistan can put together some weapons quickly, though a time period is not specified.<sup>132</sup>

So far the discussion has been limited to the strategic use of nuclear weapons. A further danger is escalation through the use of battlefield nuclear weapons, though neither explicitly threatened to deploy them. The Indian tests of 1998 were partly meant to

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<sup>128</sup> See Rajesh Kadian, 'Nuclear Weapons and the Indian Armed Forces,' pg. 222. The calculation is based on British and French projections of the British V-Bomber fleet.

<sup>129</sup> According to Ashley J. Tellis, *India's Emerging Nuclear Posture*, page 532, the minimum characteristics should be (a) adequate navigation capabilities for a different weather conditions, (b) able to carry loads over 1,000 kg, and have adequate ground clearances, (c) two-engine aircraft, (d) possession of defensive weaponry and electronic counter measures, (e) an adequate operating range.

<sup>130</sup> Rahul Bedi, 'A credible nuclear deterrent?' *Frontline*, March 9 – April 11, 2003.

<sup>131</sup> See 'India's Nuclear Forces, 2002,' NRDC Nuclear Notebook, *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, March/April 2002, and 'Pakistan's Nuclear Forces, 2001,' NRDC Nuclear Notebook, *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, January/February 2002.

<sup>132</sup> 'Proliferation: Threat and Response,' Office of the Secretary of Defense, January 2001, <http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/ptr20010110.pdf>

demonstrate that it had the capacity to manufacture a subkiloton warhead, which could be used as a battlefield nuclear device.<sup>133</sup> The accompanying tests by Pakistan were also supposed to have included such low-yield devices.<sup>134</sup> As discussed earlier, India's draft nuclear doctrine outlines a no-first use nuclear retaliatory deterrent. However, policymakers' considerations of the possibility of limited war<sup>135</sup> suggests that the use of battlefield devices might be considered in a bid to retain strategic nuclear deterrence, while maintaining conventional superiority. In the case of Pakistan, indications are that miniature nuclear devices are part of its nuclear doctrine.<sup>136</sup>

To ensure a quick and decisive conventional victory, the Indian forces might be allowed to use battlefield nuclear devices. But given the poor distinction between strategic and tactical nuclear use in the South Asian context, the possibility of Pakistan responding with a counter-value targeting strategy is almost assured. Pakistan's nuclear doctrine suggests that any deep penetration of its territory would probably provoke the use of nuclear weapons.<sup>137</sup> Since escalation would seem to have reached unacceptable levels already, it is likely that Islamabad would adopt a strategic nuclear weapon mode. Both the strategic and tactical calculations indicate that deterrence holds between the two sides, and the Indian government decided not to risk testing it.

For Pakistan, tactical nuclear strikes could have come in the form of attacks on Indian naval forces as well as Indian ground forces inside Pakistan.<sup>138</sup> The possibility of use also depends on the duration of a conflict between the two sides. The longer war continues (in a conventional manner), the more likely it is that Pakistan would use battlefield nuclear weapons, given the fact that Indian conventional superiority is likely to prevail in the long-term (though this is by no means assured, as the next section briefly speculates). But the problem of escalation through tactical weapons is also very high. Due to the close proximity of forces, military installations, and population centers on both

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<sup>133</sup> Timothy D. Hoyt, 'The Buddha Frowns? Tactical Nuclear Weapons in South Asia,' in Brian Alexander & Alistair Millar (eds.) *Tactical Nuclear Weapons*, (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, Inc., 2003), page 98.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., page 96.

<sup>136</sup> Zafar Iqbal Cheema, 'Pakistan's Nuclear Use Doctrine and Command and Control,' in Peter R. Lavoy, Scott D. Sagan and James J. Wirtz (eds.) *Planning the Unthinkable* (Cornell, NY; Cornell University Press, 2000), page 159.

<sup>137</sup> Zafar Iqbal Cheema, 'Pakistan's Nuclear Use Doctrine and Command and Control,' page 177.

<sup>138</sup> Timothy D. Hoyt, 'The Buddha Frowns? Tactical Nuclear Weapons in South Asia,' page 105.

sides, the distinction between strategic and tactical nuclear use is reduced, which in turn heightens the possibility of escalation.<sup>139</sup>

The preceding discussion suggests that the presence of nuclear weapons heightened uncertainty and the risk of nuclear confrontation, adversely impacting on India's coercive threats. Notwithstanding problems of delivery systems, command and control, it is fairly safe to say that both sides possess a perceived nuclear deterrent. But in context of this study, Indian policymakers must have considered the deficiencies of its second-strike capability, especially when it came to delivery systems. Its nuclear delivery aircraft, which are its mainstay, would have to be stationed close to the border due to their inadequate range, which would make them vulnerable to a Pakistani first strike.

The key issue is that India and Pakistan have diametrically opposite views regarding a potential military conflict between them. India would prefer to restrict a skirmish to a limited war because its conventional superiority brings it eventual victory as long as the conflict was restricted. Pakistan would prefer to escalate a conventional conflict in order to convince the adversary that its threshold for a nuclear conflict is low, which case the latter would back off. What is also crucial is that the U.S. took these nuclear postures seriously and intervened on this basis.

## Conventional Balance

New Delhi's likely military strategy during Parakram was that instead of a full-scale conventional attack, it would launch a limited strike on terrorist training camps in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK).<sup>140</sup> This would ensure that the conflict was limited and also demonstrate India's objectives – to end terrorism, rather than occupy territory. But the buildup of forces on the western desert frontier by India was proof that apart from raids into POK, it was expecting a major campaign in other sectors also. Any major conventional war between the two sides would be fought on three main land fronts – (a) Kashmir, (b) Punjab, and (c) The western desert (Rajasthan and Sind).

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid., page 104.

<sup>140</sup> Shishir Gupta, 'When India Came Close To War.'



The Indian Air Force was to play a major role in Operation Parakram given its qualitative and quantitative superiority over the Pakistani Air Force.<sup>141</sup> In coordination with the army's operations, Mirage 2000 H and MiG 27 fighters would cut off supply and communication lines as well as attack terror camps.<sup>142</sup> Meanwhile artillery guns would target Pakistani troop positions on the LOC in Kashmir. A brigade of army commandos (about 5000 troops) would be pushed into POK to dismantle the terrorist network.<sup>143</sup> Furthermore, they would also hold some territory near the Line of Control in Kashmir as a buffer and as a bargaining chip over future talks over Kashmir.

But apart from this stated conventional superiority there was also a belief among some Indian policymakers that a limited conventional war could be fought successfully, and this helped provide New Delhi with the confidence that its conventional threats would be effective. In a March 2000 interview, the then Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes had stated that, "Limited wars contained to a geographical area such as we witnessed in Kargil are inevitable with a hostile neighbor... The idea that a limited war can escalate into something more serious is not on our mind."<sup>144</sup> India's successful eviction of militants and Pakistani troops from the Kargil sector of Kashmir in the summer of 1999 gave New Delhi defense policymakers the confidence that a conventional confrontation with Pakistan could be restricted and prevented from escalating.

There was thus a widespread belief that India commands a huge lead over Pakistan in conventional weaponry, and that as long as the nuclear dimension is avoided, it can achieve a decisive victory. But a closer look shows that the qualitative difference between the two militaries is not absolute. The superiority that New Delhi currently enjoys is probably not overwhelming enough for it to mount a surprise attack on terrorism camps in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) before Pakistan can widen it to a larger conventional war with a low nuclear threshold. In fact, apart from Pakistan's counter threats to use nuclear weapons, it also threatened conventional retaliation against India. In May 2002,

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<sup>141</sup> Kanwar Sandhu, 'Converting the IAF's edge into air supremacy,' *The Hindustan Times*, January 16, 2001.

<sup>142</sup> Vishal Thapar, 'India was ready to strike POK after Parliament attack,' *The Hindustan Times*, November 13, 2002.

<sup>143</sup> Shishir Gupta, 'When India Came Close To War,' *India Today*, December 23, 2002.

<sup>144</sup> Anthony Davis, 'When Words Hurt: No Limits on a 'limited war,''' *Asiaweek*, March 31, 2000, Vol. 26, No. 12, <http://www.asiaweek.com/asiaweek/magazine/2000/0331/nat.indiapak.war.html>

Musharraf said in an interview that, if deterrence between the two sides failed, “we are very capable of an offensive defense.... These words are very important. We will take the offensive into Indian territory.”<sup>145</sup> He also argued that if India had a decisive and overwhelming conventional edge, it would have attacked Pakistan, and that therefore India had been deterred by Pakistan’s conventional might.<sup>146</sup>

Militarily, Pakistan responded to India’s mobilization with Operation Sabit Qadam (Steadfast).<sup>147</sup> It moved its 11 and 12 Corps from the Afghan border to the eastern sector. These formations are trained to fight a mountain war in Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab and on the border with the Indian state of Rajasthan.<sup>148</sup> This indicated Pakistan’s intention to take the fight to the rest of the frontier with India. Pakistan’s defensive strategy relies on limiting thrusts by Indian forces (whether in the desert sector or in Kashmir) and then launching offensives toward strategic objectives in Indian territory.<sup>149</sup> By the end of December 2001, key elements of Pakistan’s Army Reserve North (ARN) and Army Reserve South (ARS) had been moved away from the Afghan border to counter Indian mobilization from Kashmir (responsibility of ARN) and the southwestern desert frontier (ARS responsibility).<sup>150</sup> Apart from the earlier mentioned missile tests, Pakistani infantry and artillery units also conducted war games in Kashmir in March.

From the Indian perspective, the perceived lack of a sense of urgency for fulfilling its demands further damaged the credibility of its conventional threats. By the third week of January 2002, the Indian mobilization was complete. At this time, a significant proportion of Pakistan’s army, such as the two formations mentioned above, were engaged in anti-Taliban operations and this would have been an opportunity for Indian forces to stage a limited attack in order to show the seriousness of its threats and resolve. However, Indian forces restricted themselves to maintaining an aggressive posture on the border without crossing the international boundary.

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<sup>145</sup> Steve Coll, ‘Musharraf says raids in Kashmir have ended,’ *The Washington Post*, May 26, 2002.

<sup>146</sup> ‘Musharraf: Here’s what I’ll do,’ Interview with Gen. Musharraf, *The Washington Post*, June 23, 2002.

<sup>147</sup> Maj-Gen. Ashok Mehta (retd.) ‘Operation Parakram,’ *The Tribune*, August 13, 2005.

<sup>148</sup> Rahul Datta, ‘Pak shifting crack forces from Afghan to Indian side,’ *The Pioneer*, January 2, 2002.

<sup>149</sup> Peter R. Lavoy & Stephen A. Smith, ‘The Risk of Inadvertant Nuclear Use Between India and Pakistan.’

<sup>150</sup> ‘Troop mobilization almost complete,’ *The Hindu*, December 31, 2001.

After March, the momentum further slipped away as by July first week, monsoon begins in this region of the subcontinent. The soggy ground in Punjab and southern Rajasthan then impedes the mobility of mechanized forces.<sup>151</sup> Once the sense of urgency decreased, the opponent could then assume that either there was enough time for a satisfactory compromise solution to be reached or that the coercer was not completely confident in its threats. Either way, the credibility of the coercer's threats was damaged once the element of strategic surprise is gone. As India's operational plans became evident, it gave ample time for Pakistan to assemble its own defensive force. In fact according to one serving general, quoted in 2003, "Our strengths and weaknesses, equipment and formations were exposed. Luckily, there was no war towards the end of the deployment or we'd have found the going tough."<sup>152</sup>

According to Indian military analysts, 'hot pursuit' of terrorists into their camps in POK through surgical strikes was hampered due to lack of doctrinal coordination which would have fostered joint warfare concepts as well as lack of advanced equipment which would have given the Indian military laser-guided strike capability against terror groups.<sup>153</sup> This state of affairs stemmed from the general neglect of the defense services in recent years. The neglect of defense spending in India over the decades has resulted in a weaker than assumed conventional deterrent for India.<sup>154</sup> In the 1971 Bangladesh war, the conventional weapons combat ratio between the two sides was 1.75:1. By 1999, when the Kargil war was fought, this ratio had dropped to 1.22:1.<sup>155</sup> Though this ratio is slated to go up over the next five years through increases in defense spending (raising the combat ratio to 1.51:1 by 2008), a large part of the increased funding goes to sectors like salaries, fuel, and ammunition, rather than to new systems.<sup>156</sup> In terms of relative strength, while India has more tanks, infantry combat vehicles, and slightly more guns, Pakistan is ahead in

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<sup>151</sup> Interview with Lt. Gen. (retd.) V.K. Sood, New Delhi July 2005.

<sup>152</sup> Murali Krishnan & Chander Suta Dogra, 'Burden of Peace,' *Outlook*, May 19, 2003.

<sup>153</sup> Rear Admiral (retd.) Raja Menon, 'We Can, But Don't,' *Outlook*, February 11, 2002.

<sup>154</sup> Gen. Ashok K. Mehta, 'Slow and Steady,' *The Hindustan Times*, January 25, 2002; Gen. Ashok K. Mehta, 'More Bark than Bite,' [www.rediff.com](http://www.rediff.com), December 31, 2001.

<sup>155</sup> Srinjoy Chowdhury, 'Pakistan closes the gap with India on conventional arms,' *The Statesman*, April 20, 2003. The combat ratio is determined taking into account the size and quality of weaponry.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*

terms of air defense equipment.<sup>157</sup> If India had launched an offensive, it would have been from a position of relative weakness, given the adversary's defensive strength.

The proposed surgical strikes on PoK terror camps that could have limited a conflict were thus too risky because of Pakistan's threats to escalate to unacceptable levels. Even an escalation limited to purely conventional levels (at least initially) would involve offensive threats by Pakistan based mainly on armored warfare in other sectors, especially in the Rajasthan desert in the west. India's military superiority here is not necessarily decisive. It has three armored divisions in comparison to Pakistan's two. But in an emergency, Pakistan could put together an additional division. The terrain further increases the parity between the two sides, and besides, Pakistan has made considerable acquisitions of night fighting and anti-tank technology. And since it is likely to fight a defensive tank battle, this could enable it to hold its ground.<sup>158</sup> Thus for the kind of conventional conflict that Pakistan would prefer to fight, the capability gap is narrower in formations that are best at 'projecting power' – armored and mechanized forces.<sup>159</sup>

Thus, whether India chose to attack through its strike corps in the west or not, any conventional conflict would spread there, as Pakistan opened new fronts to divert India from Kashmir. A conventional war between the two sides would be fought with a policy of strategic defense, whereby the loss of territory in either the two Punjabs or in Kashmir for either side is not politically acceptable, resulting in a disproportionately higher reliance on forces for defensive measures, which, in turn, results in a status quo. A status quo would not be the Indian objective if it is the offensive side. This was especially true in the context of the stated objectives and threats that were part of Operation Parakram.<sup>160</sup>

The Indian armed forces have other problems that hamper conventional operations. It has been engaged in a counter-insurgency struggle in Kashmir since 1989, stretching its frontline troops. Around 40,000 soldiers from the army's counter-insurgency force, Rashtriya Rifles (National Rifles), are deployed in Kashmir,<sup>161</sup> besides the three regular

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Kanwar Sandhu, 'Can Indian forces deliver the killer blow?' *The Hindustan Times*, January 9, 2002.

<sup>159</sup> Bradley Graham and Thomas E. Ricks, 'Military Disparity Adds to Uncertainty.'

<sup>160</sup> Pravin Sawhney, *The Defence Makeover*, (New Delhi: Sage Publications India, 2002), page 180.

<sup>161</sup> Rahul Bedi, 'Terror in the hands of a teenager,' *Asia Times*, September 17, 2002, [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South\\_Asia/DI17Df05.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/DI17Df05.html)

army corps deployed there to man the Line of Control (LOC).<sup>162</sup> Any offensive moves by India (in any sector), is sure to be followed by a spurt in activity by Pakistan-backed insurgents. In Kashmir the Indian army would thus be facing battlefronts both on the LOC and also within the state.

These are just some of the problems facing India's conventional forces that detracted from the advantage that they had on the battlefield. Other factors included organizational problems in the forces, which were briefly mentioned in the previous section. The separation of the service headquarters and the Defense Ministry created bureaucratic hurdles in the way of successful planning. Doctrinal rivalries between the army and the air force worsened the situation. The army has traditionally preferred that the air force play a more supporting role in battle, while the air force has seen itself as a strategic force, capable of mounting independent operations as its primary objective. This ensures that joint operations, which is the norm to which most militaries aspire to, has historically not been the basis for Indian military operations.

## Disconnect between the political and military objectives

While internal doctrinal issues and capability problems dogged the Indian military, its relationship with the civilian political leadership during Parakram also failed to inspire confidence. As New Delhi communicated its list of demands to Pakistan and moved its forces to the border an important factor was ensuring that the Indian military knew what the political objectives were. This is an important factor that impacts on a key variable favoring success – strong leadership on the part of the coercer. If the military, which is the main instrument of these threats, is not kept aware of the actual political objectives, its effectiveness naturally diminishes, especially when it is maintained on high alert for extended periods of time (as was the case in Parakram – ten months)

Two points need to be made here. First, some sections of the military as well as Indian military analysts assumed that the armed forces would actually launch strikes rather

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<sup>162</sup> 'Northern Command,' GlobalSecurity.org,  
<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/india/northcom.htm>

than just threaten Islamabad. Second, it is logical to argue that if the military is convinced that it will be launching an attack, this makes the threat even more credible. But, the problem was that the troop deployment stretched for 10 months without any offensive action, despite provocations such as the Kaluchak massacre.

Several senior Indian military officers who had served in Parakram voiced dissatisfaction over the government's plans. By summer 2002, it was not just junior soldiers and non-commissioned officers, but regimental and brigade command-level officers also who were puzzled why they had been deployed for so long without launching any attack.<sup>163</sup> Their feeling was that the government did not have the guts to take decisive military action. In fact, according to a retired vice-chief of the army, the political leadership never gave a clear directive to the military leadership on the objectives of Parakram.<sup>164</sup>

This indicates that while the government made demands to Pakistan, it did not clarify to the military whether or not it would actually go to war. Furthermore, while there were aggressive statements from the political leadership, other pronouncements cast doubt on the willingness of the government to take military action. About two weeks after the May 14 Kaluchak massacre, Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes stated that there was no danger of war, saying, "For the last nearly six months, our troops are there (on the border). Pakistani troops are also there. And there hasn't been any incident, which has triggered any hostilities. Therefore, one need not be worried on this count."<sup>165</sup> While such statements helped to reduce tensions, they did not necessarily help in building up credibility of military threats. In order to retain credibility, the political and military leaders have to convince the adversary that they are willing to carry out threats.

As it happens, on at least one occasion, in January 2002, strikes had been planned on a few terrorist camps in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, which would have involved special forces and the air force in an attempt to neutralize infiltration routes.<sup>166</sup> However, the plan was canceled at the last moment. The May 2002 Kaluchak massacre of soldiers'

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<sup>163</sup> Interview with serving defense services officer, New Delhi, July 2005.

<sup>164</sup> Interview with Lt. Gen. (retd.) V.K. Sood, New Delhi, July 2005. Sood retired as army vice chief in 1993.

<sup>165</sup> Amit Baruah, 'Fernandes downplays threat of war,' *The Hindu*, June 1, 2002.

<sup>166</sup> 'Army planned offensive in POK in January,' Rediff.com, December 23, 2002. Disclosed by then army-chief designate Lt. Gen. N.C. Vij.

families at an army camp in Kashmir aroused great anger among soldiers and greatly increased the chances of war. One senior general stated that, “we will lose face if we do not fight after such a build-up and withdraw,” and that it would demonstrate that India can only threaten and not act.<sup>167</sup> Thus each time, India pulled back from the brink, it added to the military’s discomfort about its role in the crisis and actual objectives of Parakram. While such ambiguity in conveying objectives can create uncertainty in the minds of the adversary, it is not necessarily effective when the coercer’s troops are left deployed in extreme conditions for up to ten months. As the next section shows, this added to the mounting costs of the deployment.

Thus, there is a crucial difference in the civil-military set-up of both sides. Strike formations of the Indian army operate only at tactical and operational levels, and once the offensive is complete, have to wait for orders from the political leadership.<sup>168</sup> On the other hand, the Pakistan army is presumed to be in the loop right up to the strategic level, involving nuclear decision-making. Therefore, civil-military relations is a key issue that impacts on strategic decision-making. As one former Indian army chief stated, one of the key lessons of Parakram was that the senior military leadership must be involved in all decision-making that concerns the defense forces.<sup>169</sup> Therefore, the broader context of Indian decision-making during Parakram reflected the existing policy-structure, which detracted from strong leadership which is a key component of coercive diplomacy.

## Costs of deployment

As part of Operation Parakram, troops were deployed across a vast frontier from Kashmir to the Rajasthan desert in the south-west. The armored corps, comprising India’s tank forces, were in extended deployment for 10 months in the desert sector, where some of the decisive battles between the two countries have been fought. Troops were away from families for 10 months, but more than that, morale was damaged because soldiers had

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<sup>167</sup> Rahul Bedi, ‘The military dynamics.’

<sup>168</sup> ‘Show of Strength,’ *Force*, June 2006, pg. 31.

<sup>169</sup> General V.P. Malik, ‘Lessons from Army Deployment: Coercive Diplomacy and Defence Credibility,’ *The Tribune*, December 16, 2002.

no indication of whether (and when) the adversary would be attacked. Even members of the quasi-official and influential National Security Advisory Board (NSAB), especially those who had served in the military, voiced opinions that the extended deployment placed great pressure on soldiers.<sup>170</sup> Troops were stationed in far-flung areas on the border, away from the families, and many of them had been called up from hard-earned peace-tenures. Further, border areas, especially the desert sector, experience great extremes of temperature. This got worse as the Indian deployment stretched into the peak of summer.

Operationally too, the effectiveness of the deployment was not clear because militant infiltration continued throughout. In fact, apart from infiltration, regular Pakistani army troops also managed to occupy positions on the Indian side of the Line of Control at Sangarh and Loonda, as well as peaks in the Kargil area.<sup>171</sup> What this suggests is that either the mobilization was not effective enough in dealing with infiltration of militants and the Pakistani army, or that the long drawn deployment (the positions were occupied in the July-Sept. 2002 period, more than six months after mobilization) caused military efficiency to be compromised.<sup>172</sup>

Deployment of troops for 10 months in a state of high alert was also costly in monetary and logistical terms. According to one former Indian army chief, the preliminary deployment of troops cost Rs. 3000 crores (approximately \$625 million) and then about Rs. 100 crores (\$20.7 million) every subsequent month.<sup>173</sup> Other costs included compensation to displaced populations of the border areas (\$51 million till March 2002 and \$15.5-\$16.6 million every month).<sup>174</sup> These figures roughly correspond to the price tag of Rs. 6,500 crores (\$1.3 billion) that was disclosed by media sources after Parakram.<sup>175</sup> The Indo-Pak border, especially along Punjab, is heavily populated and includes large tracts of agricultural land for which the compensation would be substantial. In fact, even after Parakram had ended, the Indian Ministry of Defence was paying compensation to

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<sup>170</sup> Sandeep Dikshit, 'Stage set for troop withdrawal,' *The Hindu*, October 16, 2002.

<sup>171</sup> Praveen Swami, 'Zones of incursion,' *Frontline*, September 14-27, 2002, Vol. 19, Issue 19.

<sup>172</sup> Swami takes the latter view in 'Zones of incursion.'

<sup>173</sup> General V.P. Malik, 'Lessons from Army Deployment: Coercive Diplomacy and Defence Credibility.'

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Aditi Phadnis, 'Parakram cost put at Rs. 6,500 crore,' Rediff.com, January 16, 2003, <http://www.rediff.com/money/2003/jan/16defence.htm>



farmers in the border region for crop losses. For the financial year 2003-2004, the ministry set aside Rs 10415.79 lakhs (approximately \$22.5 million) as compensation.<sup>176</sup>

The preceding sub-sections on the costs of deployment and the political-military disconnect indicate that as the deployment stretched out, it became more and more difficult to maintain resoluteness in terms of demands and threats. This made the importance of the international community more crucial, as India would have been less resistant to pressure to demobilize.

### Implications:

#### **Did the coercer enjoy overwhelming military advantage over the target?**

As this section demonstrated, while India enjoys overwhelming conventional superiority over Pakistan, other factors detracted from this superiority. The impact of this is significant. Overwhelming military advantage would have made India's coercive threats more credible. But New Delhi's military advantage was decreased by the disconnect with the political hierarchy as well as the long period of military alert, which resulted in considerable morale problems and reduced military effectiveness. According to one former Pakistani army chief, Gen. Jehangir Karamat, "the outcome of an Indian-initiated strategic aggression against Pakistan with conventional forces has to be an outright victory for India to be considered a success. Any other outcome – for example a stalemated situation with some territorial losses – would be a victory for Pakistan."<sup>177</sup> Thus the efficacy of Indian military threats decreased as the deployment went on.

If the target believes that it can effectively counter the coercer's implementation of military threats (whether through conventional counter-attack or through nuclear strikes), successful coercion becomes more difficult. Furthermore, as India's deployment continued, the sense of urgency was reduced as there were no clear deadlines given by New Delhi to Islamabad. Thus, in accordance with the model of coercive diplomacy, there were several deficiencies in India's coercive strategy, which decreased the credibility of its threats. And since the threats were not credible enough, successful coercion became less likely.

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<sup>176</sup> Annual Report 2003-2004, Ministry of Defence, Government of India.

<sup>177</sup> Jehangir Karamat, 'Missile Acquisition by Pakistan: Military Strategic Imperatives,' *South Asian Survey*, 11:2 (2004), pg. 173.

### **Did conditions of nuclear deterrence exist?**

The importance of this question is that if nuclear deterrence was in effect in the subcontinent, it would have significantly dented the efficacy of India's conventional military threat, which was already damaged because of the problems mentioned above. In the South Asia case, key components of a credible deterrent from Pakistan were the capability as well as the willingness to use this capability. Data from 2001 shows that at that point Islamabad possessed 24-48 nuclear weapons as well as required delivery systems that could cover most of India (F-16 and Mirage V aircraft and Ghauri I/Ghauri II and Shaheen missiles).<sup>178</sup>

Additionally through testing of missiles during the crisis and through belligerent statements Pakistani military officials conveyed their willingness to escalate to a nuclear level. U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, who was closely involved in mediation efforts, stated that he was 'absolutely convinced' that the Musharraf regime would use nuclear weapons if they concluded that the Indian forces would comprehensively defeat Pakistan.<sup>179</sup> Thus, a crucial actor, the United States, was also convinced of the seriousness of nuclear confrontation, and speeded up its diplomacy in the subcontinent, as described in the next section.

## **INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT**

The 2001-2002 sub-continental crisis cannot be examined in isolation from prevailing regional political and military developments for two reasons. First, the crisis impacted on U.S. actions in Afghanistan, which depended on Pakistani logistical support. Second, nuclear weapons on both sides resulted in the involvement of the international community in trying to defuse the crisis. These factors forced the U.S. to put pressure on India and Pakistan to defuse tensions.

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<sup>178</sup> Robert S. Norris, Hans M. Kristensen, & Joshua Handler, 'Pakistan's Nuclear Forces 2001,' *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, January/February 2002, Vol. 58, No. 1, pp. 70-71, [http://www.thebulletin.org/article\\_nn.php?art\\_ofn=jf02norris](http://www.thebulletin.org/article_nn.php?art_ofn=jf02norris)

<sup>179</sup> Steve Coll, 'The Standoff.'

Theoretically, one can examine this issue through the concept of pivotal deterrence.<sup>180</sup> The process of pivotal deterrence comprises a 'pivot' state which can insert itself in a dispute between two other states and deter them from going to war with each other. In the case in consideration, the U.S. played its part in persuading both India and Pakistan that going to war would be too costly for either side, while making sure that it did not unambiguously lean toward one against the other. Hence, the role of the United States in preventing India from carrying out its threats is significant.

While the main focus of U.S. pressure was Islamabad, this was tempered by two important factors. First was the vulnerability of the Musharraf regime. After 9/11, Musharraf attempted to purge the higher military leadership (including the ISI) of radical Islamists with Taliban links.<sup>181</sup> In such a scenario, if Musharraf was seen to be conceding to India under U.S. pressure then the possibility of internal upheaval or even a coup would have been enhanced. In this sense, Musharraf's perceived vulnerability after 9/11 in the face of large scale protests by Islamic groups against the country's alliance with the U.S. strengthened his bargaining position,<sup>182</sup> especially vis-à-vis Kashmir. Though ostensibly his democratic credentials were suspect, the perception was that all possible alternatives to him were either too weak or fundamentalist in ideology. At a time when anger had been mounting in the Islamic world, a Taliban-style regime in Pakistan would have caused irreparable harm to U.S. counter-terrorism policy.

The second factor was the campaign in Afghanistan. Washington required Pakistan's assistance in operations against the Taliban and Al Qaeda. The Indo-Pak standoff would divert Pakistani troops away from their anti-terrorism role on the border with Afghanistan. In fact, within weeks of the Parliament attack, in January 2002, as India

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<sup>180</sup> Timothy W. Crawford, *Pivotal Deterrence*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003). According to Crawford, "*Pivotal deterrence* involves the manipulation of threats and promises in order to prevent war. Like other forms of deterrence, it tries to prevent war by making potential belligerents fear the costs, by confronting them with risks they do not want to run. There are two other important dimensions of the concept. First, the deterrer must hold a "pivotal" position between the adversaries, which means that it can more easily align with either side than they can align with each other and that it can significantly influence who will win a war between the two. Second, a pivotal deterrer will try to maintain flexibility and avoid consistent alignment in relation to the adversaries, and therefore avoid firm commitments to either side."

<sup>181</sup> Stephen F. Burgess, 'Struggle for the control of Pakistan: Musharraf takes on the Islamist radicals,' in Barry R. Schneider & Jerrold M. Post, *Know Thy Enemy: Profiles of Adversary Leaders and Their Strategic Cultures*, (Defense Dept., United States Air Force Counterproliferation Center, 2003), pp. 85-108.

<sup>182</sup> Husain Haqqani, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military*, pg. 302.

mobilized its military, Islamabad withdrew half its troops from the Afghan border.<sup>183</sup> During the second major period of tension after the May 2002 Kaluchak attack, Musharraf publicly announced that he was considering withdrawing troops from the Afghan border again, saying at a news conference that, “We are very seriously contemplating moving some elements...on to the east if at all the tensions remain as high as they are now.”<sup>184</sup>

But while, the U.S. had to limit the pressure on Pakistan, it had to persuade it to concede to some degree to defuse immediate tensions. Washington’s major concern was the prospect of nuclear war. A classified Pentagon study predicted that in a nuclear confrontation between India and Pakistan, there would be up to 12 million immediate casualties.<sup>185</sup> The chaos emanating from such a scenario would completely overwhelm U.S. resources in an area where vast numbers of U.S. troops were stationed. Thus for the U.S., a key contextual variable – image of war – forced it to intervene. Even before the December crisis, U.S. policymakers were concerned that components of Pakistan’s nuclear weapon arsenal might fall into the hands of Al Qaeda-related groups or might be handed down to a successor regime linked to fundamentalist groups.<sup>186</sup>

The first instance of U.S. pressure on Islamabad was immediately after the Parliament attack. Following the attack, President Bush called upon Gen. Musharraf “to take additional strong and decisive measures to eliminate the extremists who seek to harm India, undermine Pakistan, provoke a war between India and Pakistan, and destabilize the international coalition against terrorism.”<sup>187</sup> At the same time, he urged the Indian government to take into account Islamabad’s recent efforts at clamping down on militant groups after the attack.

The second major period of tension in the crisis was after the Kaluchak massacre on May 27, 2002. U.S. pressure on Pakistan increased immediately after this attack. Disregarding Gen. Musharraf’s protests that there was no infiltration across the Line of Control, President Bush said that, “He (Musharraf) must stop the incursions across the

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<sup>183</sup> ‘Pakistan reinforces troops along Kashmir border,’ CNN.com, January 2, 2002, <http://archives.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/asiapcf/south/01/02/pakistan.india/index.html>

<sup>184</sup> ‘Pakistan may deploy more troops,’ *The Tribune*, May 31, 2002.

<sup>185</sup> Sridhar Krishnaswami, ‘The growing U.S. role,’ *Frontline*, Vol. 19, Issue 13, June 22-July 5, 2002.

<sup>186</sup> Steven Mufson, ‘U.S. Worried About Pakistan Nuclear Arms,’ *The Washington Post*, November 4, 2001.

<sup>187</sup> Mike Allen, ‘President Asks Blair For Help Defusing South Asia Crisis,’ *The Washington Post*, December 30, 2001.

Line of Control... He must do so. He said he would do so. We and the others are making it clear to him that he must live up to his word.”<sup>188</sup> Bush also responded to Pakistan’s threat to move its troops from their counter-terror role in Afghanistan, by saying that this move would not affect the offensive against Al Qaeda.<sup>189</sup> Secretary of State Colin Powell also weighed in, saying that infiltration was continuing, and that, “There is an urgency to it (decreasing infiltration)... The situation has not improved in the last month or so. We were receiving assurances from President Musharraf that infiltration across the LoC (Line of Control) would be ended. But unfortunately we can still see evidence that it is continuing.”<sup>190</sup>

Subsequent to each of the two periods of tension (January and in May-June after the Kaluchak massacre), General Musharraf’s two speeches (on Jan. 12<sup>th</sup> and May 27<sup>th</sup>) helped defuse immediate tensions. Each speech came about through direct pressure from Secretary of State Colin Powell and according to one source quoted by an influential Indian analyst, the drafts of the speeches and changes were approved by Powell.<sup>191</sup> The key turning point was Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage’s meeting with General Musharraf in early June 2002. In this meeting, Armitage received assurances from Musharraf that there would be a ‘permanent end’ to terrorist activity from Pakistan directed at India.<sup>192</sup> This assurance, which was also a surprise to the Indian government, became the point of reference for defusing tensions in the subsequent months.

Further, Washington also tried to ensure that the message in the speeches remained constant and was not subject to interpretations by Musharraf to satisfy his domestic audience. After Musharraf’s concessionary speech in May 2002, he backed away from a permanent commitment. To ensure that this did not wreck the fledgling peace process, U.S. State Department officials, including Secretary Powell intervened, with the result that the State Department spokesman later reiterated that Musharraf’s promise to end infiltration was a “a commitment that’s been made very clear.”<sup>193</sup> Musharraf’s concessions were

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<sup>188</sup> Sridhar Krishnaswami, ‘A blunt message to Pak,’ *The Hindu*, June 1, 2002.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Sridhar Krishnaswami, ‘Infiltration still on: Powell,’ *The Hindu*, June 1, 2002.

<sup>191</sup> Maj-Gen. Ashok Mehta (retd.) ‘Operation Parakram.’

<sup>192</sup> Glenn Kessler, ‘A Defining Moment in Islamabad,’ *The Washington Post*, June 22, 2002.

<sup>193</sup> Karl Vick & Kamran Khan, ‘Pakistani Ambivalence Frustrates Hope for Kashmir Peace.’

accepted by India, with Prime Minister Vajpayee stating a few weeks later that, “If Pakistan had not agreed to end infiltration, and American had not conveyed that guarantee to India, then war would not have been averted.”<sup>194</sup>

But it was difficult for Washington to go beyond these pressures on Pakistan. The administration tried to ensure that Musharraf’s concessionary statements and temporary decrease of infiltration helped defuse tensions. Apart from that, the spate of attacks on Western targets in Pakistan in the summer of 2002 by Al Qaeda-linked groups suggested that further pressure by the U.S. would destabilize the Musharraf regime and in fact threaten his life itself.<sup>195</sup>

The other focus of U.S. pressure was India but not to the level of the pressure on Pakistan. Washington sought to modify New Delhi’s objectives, by focusing on decreasing infiltration and the September 2002 election in Kashmir. By reducing and reformulating objectives, there could at least be a temporary reduction of tensions. As the next section on the Kashmir election shows, such modifications of India’s objectives removed the focus from initial demands such as the list of wanted terrorists, and the complete cessation of violence.

This has to be seen in context of the situation in Afghanistan in the same period. By May 2002, Al Qaeda fighters were concentrated in the Waziristan region of Pakistan, which borders Afghanistan. Washington wanted the Pakistani military to combat these groups in its territory, which was different from providing logistical assistance to U.S. forces in Afghanistan, which Pakistan had been doing since the 9/11 attacks. However, the top Pakistani military leadership decided that the U.S. government should be informed that if the situation with India did not calm down, it would not be possible for the Pakistani army to combat Al Qaeda fighters on its border with Afghanistan.<sup>196</sup> Furthermore, the internal opposition by Islamic parties against combating Taliban-related groups in Pakistani territory itself would have been too severe. This was a crucial bargaining chip that Pakistan employed to limit U.S. pressure.

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<sup>194</sup> Glenn Kessler, ‘A Defining Moment in Islamabad.’

<sup>195</sup> Kamran Khan, ‘Attacks in Pakistan linked,’ *The Washington Post*, August 10, 2002.

<sup>196</sup> Thomas E. Ricks & Kamran Khan, ‘U.S. Urges Pakistan Toward New Attacks,’ *The Washington Post*, May 12, 2002.

To prevent the two countries from going to war after the Kaluchak massacre, Washington tried other public methods in order to dissuade them. One crucial step was to announce that departure of non-essential personnel from its embassy in India, and to recommend that American nationals defer travel to the region.<sup>197</sup> Other countries, such as Australia, UK, Germany, and France also advised their non-essential diplomatic staff to leave the country. According to the Australian embassy, this had more to do with the uncertainty of the situation rather than fear of conflict.<sup>198</sup> Even if this was the aim of just one country, it indicates a desire to positively influence the uncertainty and defuse tensions. Further, a step of this magnitude adversely impacts on foreign investment and plans of multinational companies in India. For a country with a growing liberalizing economy this was a major source of pressure.

As it happens, thousands of U.S. soldiers were already stationed at various air bases in Pakistan, such as Jacobabad and Pasni. If we consider Pakistan's limited geographical depth and its threats to widen any conventional attack by India, it was very likely that these bases would be used by the Pakistan Air Force, and would also have become a target for Indian bombing. Thus the possibility of U.S. forces and its nationals being directly in the line of fire in the event of hostilities between India and Pakistan was high (Even though the U.S. was drawing up contingency plans for evacuation it is not clear if all its personnel would have been moved out).

As the deployment stretched out, other sources also pressurized India to stand down its troops. At the third European Union-India summit in early October 2002 in Copenhagen, Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen stated that India needed to deescalate and open talks with Pakistan. The summit was controversial also because the EU and India were unable to agree on a common statement on Kashmir.<sup>199</sup> By October 2002, the concern, according to some Indian analysts, was that if New Delhi retained its

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<sup>197</sup> John H. Gill, 'Dissuasion and Confrontation: U.S. Policy in India-Pakistan Crises,' *Strategic Insights*, Vol. III, Issue 10, October 2004.

<sup>198</sup> 'More foreigners leaving India,' *The Hindu*, June 2, 2002.

<sup>199</sup> Amit Baruah, 'India, E.U. differ on Kashmir,' *The Hindu*, October 11, 2002, <http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/2002/10/11/stories/2002101107350100.htm>; Amit Baruah, 'Lessons from Copenhagen' *The Hindu*, October 12, 2002, <http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/2002/10/12/stories/2002101204441100.htm>

confrontationist posture, it might fritter away some of the gains of Operation Parakram.<sup>200</sup> These gains were the international support it had achieved for its position and Musharraf's unprecedented promises in January and June 2002 to prevent terrorist activity originating from Pakistan. The longer New Delhi refused to negotiate, the greater the chance that world opinion would eventually shift toward Pakistan, as Pakistan could then state that it was amenable to talks while India was not.

Thus, while there was international support for India's concerns (the problem of terrorism), this support did not necessarily extend to New Delhi's strategy for alleviating these concerns (i.e., military threats). International support, a variable favoring success in coercive diplomacy, was therefore not overwhelmingly in India's favor, mainly on account of the image that a sub-continental war presented, as well as the its negative impact on the anti-terror operations in Afghanistan. Therefore, the U.S. followed a dual approach. First, it exerted pressure on Pakistan to satisfy India's demands, however temporarily, while ensuring that Pakistan did not publicly backtrack on its promises. Second, Washington set about helping to modify India's objectives, which would enable it (India) to move toward ending the standoff. This objectives modification strategy was centered around the scheduled elections in Kashmir in September 2002, and is elaborated in the next section.

An analysis of the international strategic environment highlights an important point pertaining to coercive diplomacy. Since a crucial Indian objective was to get U.S. support, New Delhi also had to convince the U.S. that it was serious in its threats. This India was able to do, judging from Washington's concern for nuclear war as well as its concern for the impact on operations in Afghanistan. This showed that apart from the direct coercion that New Delhi was applying on Pakistan, it was also applying indirect coercion through the U.S.

Therefore, by convincing Washington that India was ready to attack (at least till May 2002) India got the U.S. to pressurize Pakistan. Here the concept of assurances is important (mentioned in chapter 1). An important part of indirect coercion was that India had to provide an implicit assurance to the U.S. that if it persuaded Pakistan to make concessions, the military standoff would be eased. From the perspective of CD this

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<sup>200</sup> C. Raja Mohan, 'Re-engaging Pakistan,' *The Hindu*, October 10, 2002.



highlights the increased importance third parties can play in a coercive equation. While on the one hand some entities can disrupt coercion through their role as spoilers, in this case the U.S. played the role of a ‘facilitator’ by extracting concessions from Pakistan for India while legitimizing the modification of India’s objectives (as the next section on Kashmir elections shows).

### Implications:

**How did the confrontation impact on the interests of third parties and eventually coercive diplomacy? Did the point of dispute affect other security issues in the region?**

If major powers have a stake in a coercive equation between two states, it increases the possibility of third party interference. In Operation Parakram, Washington’s concern was two-fold. First, that the standoff could degenerate into a nuclear clash. Second, that it would adversely affect Washington’s counter-terrorism campaign in Afghanistan as Pakistan would have to divert its troops to the border with India. These factors forced the U.S. to intervene.

Washington followed a two-pronged strategy. First, senior Bush administration officials put pressure on Gen. Musharraf to offer some concessions by clamping down on Pakistan-based jihadi groups that were involved in violence in Kashmir. Second, the U.S. emphasized on New Delhi to show restraint. Washington’s policymakers were driven by a conviction that if New Delhi’s coercive policy continued it would spiral into a conventional conflict with a low nuclear threshold. On the one hand, New Delhi was able to convince the U.S. that it was determined to take military action, while on the other hand, Islamabad convinced the U.S. that it would respond with nuclear weapons in the event of expected conventional successes by India.

However, despite the mutual belligerence by Islamabad and New Delhi, Washington’s policymakers were of the opinion that the two sides were looking for a solution. According to the then U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, “They were proud leaders who had got themselves out on a limb and needed to find a way

back.”<sup>201</sup> This reiterates the importance of third parties in a coercive equation, especially when the image of war is so catastrophic. Thus, one way to deal with an impasse brought on by the image of war is to seek third party intervention, whether in public, or through secret negotiations. Third parties, especially influential actors such as the U.S., can help by facilitating or imposing some clarity of settlement which can assuage the suspicions of either side.

Thus the issue of reassurances is crucial here also, except that these reassurances are being provided not by one or the other of the protagonists but by the third party, or ‘facilitator.’<sup>202</sup> Reassurances by third parties can circumvent problems of high asymmetry of interests and deep suspicion on both sides of the coercive equation. One example from this case is the reported secret clause dealing with peace talks that India accepted as a concession to Pakistan’s pledge to clamp down on militants (see section on Indian objectives). It is doubtful if such a secret commitment could have been made in bilateral negotiations between the two sides; indeed, New Delhi refused to negotiate directly with Islamabad after the Parliament attack. Therefore, reassurance through third parties can provide the plausible deniability that can be adopted in the event of loss of face or domestic opposition to talks with the adversary.

The international community, led by the U.S., also played an important role in the modification of objectives by India. As this section and the next section on internal factors demonstrate, successful state assembly elections in Kashmir in September 2002 were used by New Delhi as a major accomplishment of its Kashmir policy as well as its anti-militancy campaign. In this manner the Indian government was able to reframe its objectives from the rigid original demands presented to Pakistan.

The international community assisted in this modification of objectives by endorsing the process of democracy in Kashmir and approving the September 2002 elections there, which led to a Congress Party-led coalition in Srinagar (the capital of Kashmir). The subsequent condemnation by the EU of the military-dominated elections in Pakistan implicitly bolstered India’s case and allowed it to modify its goals. This modification then enabled New Delhi to justify ending the standoff in October 2002.

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<sup>201</sup> Steve Coll, ‘The Stand-off,’ *The New Yorker*, February 13, 2006.

<sup>202</sup> As opposed to a ‘spoiler.’

## INTERNAL FACTORS

Apart from credibility issues and international factors, domestic political and bureaucratic issues contributed to the conduct of Operation Parakram. These factors included the Gujarat riots in February-March 2002, and state election in Kashmir in September 2002. While the prevailing domestic environment after 9/11 helped heighten the aggressive tone of the ruling party, the scheduled elections in Kashmir for fall 2002, helped to modify India's objectives, which then allowed the government to end Parakram.

### Domestic politics

Domestic political disputes and the February-March 2002 Gujarat riots helped to shape the attitudes of the ruling coalition in the initial stages of the deployment. While the opposition Congress Party and the Communist parties condemned the Parliament attack, they also came down strongly on the security and intelligence failure by the government. This put pressure on the government which had always portrayed itself as strong on defense and counter-terrorism. Even before the December attack, the BJP-led coalition had decided to use counter-terrorism as a political tool in view of the February 2002 state assembly election in the northern province of Uttar Pradesh (UP), which is politically the most important state in the country. This was the party's major theme and was highlighted at the party's national meeting in November 2001, by among others, UP Chief Minister Rajnath Singh (now BJP Party President).<sup>203</sup> This reflected a realization that as a coalition government, continuing to use the Ayodhya mosque/temple issue as the main election plank was now counterproductive, and that the campaign against terrorism could now be exploited to gain popular electoral support.

Further, in 2001, the government also introduced a new law titled the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance (POTO; also known as Prevention of Terrorism Act, after it was passed by Parliament), which was part of the larger political emphasis on counter-

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<sup>203</sup> Saba Naqvi Bhaumik, 'Poto Opportunity,' *Outlook*, November 19, 2001.

terrorism. This law, due to its controversial provisions on civil liberties, became an important point of contention between the ruling party and the opposition; for the BJP the publicly stated attitude was that any party that opposed POTO helped terrorism.<sup>204</sup> The larger campaign against terrorism and the December 13 attack was thus a way to use an international crisis for domestic political gains.<sup>205</sup> Thus the period after the September 11 attacks was one in which the ruling coalition was gearing up to utilize terrorism as an election tool which meant that the December 13 attack provoked an aggressive response.

The second domestic factor that impacted on Parakram was the outbreak of riots in the western state of Gujarat in February-March 2002. The riots, orchestrated by right-wing Hindu groups, followed the burning of train compartment in Godhra (Gujarat), which was carrying Hindu pilgrims from Ayodhya (the site of the mosque destruction in December 2002). Hundreds of Muslims were killed in these riots by right-wing Hindu gangs, allegedly linked to the ruling state government (also a BJP regime). While official estimates casualties are below 800, unofficial estimates are at least 2,000, which include killings in rural areas.<sup>206</sup> In the midst of this internal crisis, almost a division-worth<sup>207</sup> of troops had to be recalled from the border to help quell the violence, and these troops were able to return to the border only in May 2002.<sup>208</sup>

Elements within the BJP (the leader of the coalition of 12 parties constituting the National Democratic Alliance) also saw the Gujarat riots as a major failure. According to Jaswant Singh, the Indian foreign minister from December 1998 to July 2002, the riots were a 'blot on Gujarat's face.'<sup>209</sup> He also stated that, "a mishandling of events, as a consequence of Godhra and whatever happened as a reaction, gave substance to the worst

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<sup>204</sup> Priya Sahgal, 'LoPOTomised Deal,' *Outlook*, December 3, 2001.

<sup>205</sup> See for example Davis B. Bobrow, 'Stories Remembered and Forgotten,' *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 33, No. 2, June 1989, pg. 204.

<sup>206</sup> 'Gujarat Carnage 2002,' Report by an Independent Fact Finding Mission, Kamal Mitra Chenoy, S.P. Shukla, K.S. Subramanian, and Achin Vanaik, April 11, 2002, <http://www.outlookindia.com/specialfeaturem.asp?fodname=20020411&fname=chenoy&sid=1>

<sup>207</sup> A division consists of between 15,000-20,000 troops.

<sup>208</sup> Col. Anil Athale, 'Did Godhra Save Pakistan?' Rediff.com, March 8, 2005, <http://in.rediff.com/news/2005/mar/03spec1.htm>. According to Athale, the Godhra incident was deliberately organized by Pakistan to avoid an inevitable Indian attack. However, there is no evidence to support this assertion.

<sup>209</sup> C. Raja Mohan, 'Now, Jaswant hits out at Gujarat riots: it was a blot, sullied BJP image,' *The Indian Express*, July 24, 2006. The article quotes his memoirs, *A Call to Honour: In Service of Emergent India*, released in 2006.

imaginings about the BJP, so were forced to observe even those who remain very sympathetic towards it.”<sup>210</sup>

Furthermore, the Gujarat riots were also used by Gen. Musharraf to counter India’s assertions of Pakistan’s support to terrorism. At the UN General Assembly’s annual session in September 2002, he stated that those responsible for the killings should be brought to justice. Musharraf equated the riots with international terrorism saying, “the international community must act to oppose extremism with the same determination it displayed in combating terrorism, religious bigotry, ethnic cleansing and fascist tendencies elsewhere in the world.”<sup>211</sup> At the same time, prior to Deputy Secretary of State Armitage’s visit to India in September 2002, the Commission on International Religious Freedom, an official U.S. government agency, recommended that he should express to the Indian government, Washington’s ‘profound concern’ regarding the anti-Muslim riots in Gujarat.<sup>212</sup> Thus, at a time when international and domestic support was crucial to New Delhi’s case against Pakistan, the Godhra riots proved to be an unwelcome distraction.

## Elections in Kashmir

Coinciding with the long deployment on the border was the state assembly election in Jammu & Kashmir in September 2002. Over the decades, one of the main complaints of the Kashmiri populace was the rigging of successive elections in the state which rendered the democratic process meaningless. In 2002, the Indian Election Commission (which operates autonomously from the government) was committed to free and fair elections in Jammu and Kashmir as a major step toward restoring normalcy in the state. The European Union welcomed the conduct of the elections, stating that “the EU welcomes the strenuous efforts of the Indian Election Commission in promoting free and fair elections. We encourage the Indian government to follow through on its commitment to fully investigate

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> Amit Baruah, ‘Musharraf rakes up Gujarat killings,’ *The Hindu*, September 13, 2002.

<sup>212</sup> John Cherian, ‘Another Armitage Mission,’ *Frontline*, August 31-September 13, 2002.

reports of irregularities... (The) Elections will be a starting point for a forward-looking and inclusive dialogue with Kashmiri stakeholders.”<sup>213</sup>

Before the elections, Prime Minister Vajpayee had already emphasized the importance of the Kashmir election. In his Independence Day address from the historic Red Fort, he said that, “I wish to assure the people of Jammu and Kashmir that if any mistakes have occurred, we shall make amends.”<sup>214</sup> His reference here to the perceived discrimination and electoral malpractices in the past has to be seen in context of the need to place the upcoming election as a test case of India-Pakistan relations. Indeed in the same address he disparaged Gen. Musharraf’s description of the election as a ‘farce,’ stating that “Those who call the forthcoming elections in the state farcical should not give us lectures on democracy. Let them take a look at their own track record.”<sup>215</sup>

The ‘track record’ here is a reference to the military nature of the regime in Pakistan. Indeed, the October 2002 parliamentary elections held in Pakistan under military rule were roundly criticized by the EU observers’ mission there. Condemning the military regime’s bias toward friendly political parties, the EU stated that, “regrettably, in choosing the course of interference, the Pakistan authorities engaged in actions which resulted in serious flaws in the electoral process.”<sup>216</sup> Furthermore, in Pakistan’s provincial elections, fundamentalist parties came to power in Baluchistan and North West Frontier Province, hardly a positive development from the perspective of the ‘campaign against terror.’

The important aspect here is not whether elections in Indian Kashmir and in Pakistan were free and fair or not, but that for New Delhi successful conduct of Kashmir elections provided an indirect route to announcing a withdrawal of troops, which occurred within days of the EU’s statement. The BJP was soundly defeated in the assembly election which was won by an alliance of the Congress Party and the People’s Democratic Party (PDP). The BJP leadership explained its defeat saying that the elections were not about party politics but a contest between Pakistan-backed terrorism and Indian democracy, and

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<sup>213</sup> K.K. Katyal, ‘E.U. hails J&K poll, faults that of Pak,’ *The Hindu*, October 14, 2002.

<sup>214</sup> ‘Kashmir no piece of land but test case of secularism,’ Prime Minister A B Vajpayee’s Independence Day address, *The Indian Express*, August 16, 2002.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> K.K. Katyal, ‘E.U. hails J&K poll, faults that of Pak.’

the latter had won.<sup>217</sup> Such a statement would be intended to put on a brave face for the domestic audience. But it also contributed to an environment in which New Delhi could justify ending Operation Parakram, citing positive political developments in Kashmir, the main source of dispute between India and Pakistan.

The democratic change of government in Kashmir from the previous National Conference (NC) to the Congress-PDP alliance reflected a desire for change in the state, according to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and in fact official sources also opined that the assembly elections strengthened India's position against Pakistan.<sup>218</sup> In another statement, Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani hailed the conduct of elections and said that, "there is a definite shift in the past one year and Pakistan has changed its language now. It has started condemning the terrorist acts in India now, which includes the killing of innocent women and children whereas earlier it used to call it as 'azadi ki ladai' (fight for freedom)."<sup>219</sup>

Therefore, the Kashmir assembly election was an important factor in modifying India's coercive objectives by providing a cover for these changes. The international community also helped to reframe the issue by highlighting the importance of these elections and placing it in context of broader Indo-Pak relations. Just prior to the September 2002 elections, international figures who visited New Delhi included then U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, who linked the Kashmir election with positive developments between India and Pakistan.<sup>220</sup>

Therefore, by August 2002, with the upcoming elections in both Kashmir and Pakistan, the strategy of the Vajpayee government was slowly moving from the 10-month long military coercion to emphasizing the democratic credentials of India and using this contrast with Pakistan to make a point to the international community.

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<sup>217</sup> 'BJP's route complete,' *The Hindu*, October 11, 2002.

<sup>218</sup> Arati R. Jerath, 'Why Vajpayee has reason to smile,' *The Indian Express*, October 11, 2002.

<sup>219</sup> 'Democracy has won: Advani,' *The Hindu*, October 10, 2002.

<sup>220</sup> V.R. Raghavan, 'Kashmir, the U.S. and Pakistan,' *The Hindu*, August 20, 2002.

Implications:

**How did these internal factors impact on the respective positions of the parties in the coercive diplomacy equation?**

The New Delhi government used internal political issues for contradictory purposes in its conduct of Operation Parakram. First, domestic political reasons persuaded the BJP-led government to exploit Operation Parakram as well as the Parliament attack for electoral gains, especially in the February 2002 assembly election in the largest province of Uttar Pradesh. A decision to use the anti-terrorism plank for domestic political purposes had already been taken by the top leadership of the BJP, even before the Parliament attack.

The BJP which had traditionally advocated a tough line on security issues, therefore hardened its stance even further after the Parliament attack. This meant that a tougher message was sent to Pakistan, which ensured a high magnitude of demands. This raised Pakistan's stakes in the crisis and lessened the chances of successful coercive diplomacy by India. Additionally, these demands were very specific and very public, and therefore it was difficult for India to backtrack from them.

From the Pakistani perspective, the February 2002 anti-Muslim riots in Gujarat provided Gen. Musharraf with a way to put India at a disadvantage internationally, but it did not impact on the stance of the international community. By equating the riots with the Parliament attack, Musharraf tried to manipulate the type of provocation issue. If sufficient ambiguity could have been infused into the broader state of Indo-Pakistan relations as well as the Muslim community in India, the sympathy of the international community might have moved away from India's position on the specific issue of the Parliament attack. However, this did not take place, as at least then, the BJP-led state government's complicity in the attack was sufficiently shrouded in ambiguity.

As stated, the elections in the state of Uttar Pradesh in February 2002 encouraged the BJP-led government in New Delhi increase the magnitude of its demands and objectives. Subsequently, the September 2002 elections in the state of Jammu & Kashmir allowed it to modify and lessen these very demands. By modifying its objectives and choosing a lesser one – that of successful elections in Kashmir, India was able to end the standoff in a more dignified manner.



What this suggests is that multiple objectives is not necessarily a negative issue in terms of ending coercive diplomacy. It does not mean that the main objectives were fulfilled but that flexibility of objectives is an integral requirement to coercive diplomacy. As mentioned in chapter 1, it is a characteristic displayed in the Laos crisis in which President Kennedy modified U.S. objectives to bringing peace and stability in Laos, which was a major reduction from President Eisenhower's objectives of stopping the spread of communism. Therefore, this section underscores the importance of limited objectives, flexibility of objectives, and a recognition that in the middle of a crisis, the coercer's objectives might have to be modified.

## **COERCIVE DIPLOMACY BY INDIA: DID IT SUCCEED?**

After ten months of a warlike deployment on the border with Pakistan, the Indian armed forces finally stood down in October 2002. According to Defence Minister George Fernandes, Operation Parakram had achieved its objective which was "to act on the orders that would be given and secure the frontiers which were being threatened."<sup>221</sup> The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) took the decision after a cost-benefit analysis by the National Security Advisory Board conveyed to the National Security Council that the gains from deployment of troops were outweighed by the disadvantages.<sup>222</sup>

Nuclear deterrence played a major role in preventing a conventional engagement, especially one begun by India. It demonstrated to the international community, especially the U.S., the unacceptable image of a nuclear war, and forced it to mediate in the crisis. But while there was international support for India's broader objectives (ending militancy), this support did not necessarily extend to India's methods for achieving these objectives.

From the Indian perspective, the initial demands made to Pakistan were too rigid and specific to allow an ambiguous concession from Pakistan, one which would have allowed it to save face in front of a hostile domestic opposition. These objectives did not take into account the realities of the Musharraf regime. At a time when Pakistan was siding

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<sup>221</sup> Sandeep Dikshit, 'Govt. orders withdrawal of troops from IB,' *The Hindu*, October 10, 2002.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

with the U.S. in Afghanistan, concessions on Kashmir would have been unacceptable to fundamentalist groups within the country as well as to hard-line elements within the military and the ISI. Further, in the wake of U.S. action in Afghanistan, large numbers of militants were fleeing to relative safe havens within Pakistan, which created further domestic pressure from radical groups. These factors threatened the existence of the Musharraf regime itself. Therefore, from the perspective of coercive diplomacy, the motivation was higher for Pakistan, i.e., its stakes in the crisis were higher than that of India, and therefore the asymmetry of interests shifted in favor of Islamabad.

Other factors, dealing with conventional balance and extended deployment further reduced the efficacy of India's threats. As the stalemate continued, the impending elections in Kashmir allowed India to modify its objectives, with the support of the U.S. The successful conduct of assembly elections in Kashmir and its approval by the international community<sup>223</sup> amounted to a face-saving accomplishment for New Delhi and paved the way for ending the mobilization. For the first time in decades, Kashmiris got a genuinely popular government after successive elections were marred by rigging, boycotts and low turnouts. The elections gave much needed credibility to the Indian position on Kashmir.

For India, there were limited gains from this exercise. The most important of these was support from the international community. The U.S. and U.K. came round to the position that violence in Kashmir is the work of terrorist elements and not freedom fighters. During Parakram, for the first time General Musharraf stated publicly, on two occasions, that Pakistani-territory or Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir would not be allowed to be used for purposes of terrorism in Kashmir. Considering that in the past Pakistani leaders had always linked this to Kashmiri separatism this was a major break. Furthermore, such concessions would be an important reference point for future peace talks. Thus one could argue that this declaration as well as Pakistan's ban on two prominent terrorist groups (Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed) and the temporary arrest of their leaders was a major gain. But these moves were merely cosmetic. Within a few months the militant leaders had been released,<sup>224</sup> and the outfits had regrouped under new names.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> For example, Press Statement by Richard Boucher, U.S. State Department, 'Jammu and Kashmir: Elections,' October 10, 2002, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2002/14278.htm>

<sup>224</sup> Hussain Haqqani, 'Pakistan Frees Terrorist Leaders,' *Asian Wall Street Journal*, January 7, 2003.

India's main objective – ending infiltration of Pakistan-backed militants to Kashmir – was only partially fulfilled. The Indian Army chief during this period, Gen. S. Padmanabhan, stated that infiltration had declined, but this did not end violence in Kashmir, which continued throughout Parakram (There were several serious incidents, the prominent ones being the Kaluchak massacre in May 2002, and the assault on Akshardham temple in September 2002). Even the state election in September 2002, overall a successful exercise, was accompanied by large-scale political violence (946 killed in the state from July to October 2002), while infiltration of militants was put at 284 for the month of September, about the same as the 2001 figure for the same month.<sup>226</sup> Even if these are inflated official figures, it underscores the failure of India's coercive diplomacy on this important objective.

Further, the 2003-03 annual report of the Indian Ministry of Defence stated that even though the mountainous passes in Kashmir were snow-clogged in January 2003 (three months after Parakram ended), infiltration in this month was higher as compared to January 2002 (when Musharraf made his first speech pledging to clamp down on terrorism originating from Pakistan).<sup>227</sup> And in the period July-September 2003 (the traditional months of militant infiltration when the snow melts), infiltration was higher when compared to the same period in 2002 (immediately after the May 2002 Kaluchak massacre, when Musharraf made his second speech promising to prevent militants from operating from Pakistan).<sup>228</sup> Indian Home Ministry figures also refuted the political leadership's claims. Between September 11, 2001 and December 12, 2002 (two months after Parakram ended), there were 3,940 terrorism-related deaths which was similar to the figure for the calendar year 2001 – 3,970.<sup>229</sup>

Longer-term assessments thus suggest that initial concessions by General Musharraf to turn off militant flow have been reversed. Even after Parakram ended, Pakistani military officials stated that a complete u-turn on support to Kashmiri militants

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<sup>225</sup> Kartikeya Sharma, 'Rumble in the Valley,' *The Week*, May 12, 2002.

<sup>226</sup> V. Sudarshan, 'Withdrawal Symptoms,' *Outlook*, October 28, 2002.

<sup>227</sup> Annual Report, 2003-2004, Ministry of Defence, Government of India, pg. 29.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Praveen Swami, 'A year after the attack,' *Frontline*, January 18-31, 2003, Vol. 20, Issue 1.

was not possible unless India offered major concessions.<sup>230</sup> Meanwhile, militant violence has persisted since Operation Parakram, and in fact has spread to other parts of India. This reflects a desire by Pakistan-based militant groups to widen the scope of violence geographically. It also involves recruiting Indian groups such as the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) which has been implicated in the Mumbai train bombings (July 2006) and the Varanasi attack (March 2006). Independent reports have also confirmed that militant groups which had resumed their activities through other front organizations have been at the forefront of relief work after the October 2006 Kashmir earthquake. The organizations include the Al Rasheed Trust, which evolved from the banned Jaish-e-Mohammed, and the Jamaat ud-Dawa, the parent organization of Lashkar-e-Toiba.<sup>231</sup> The fact that these groups operated in earthquake-affected areas where international agencies were also present indicates that they were not under any stringent government control.

From the U.S. perspective, the Bush administration successfully helped India change the objectives in order to bring about de-escalation. The increased focus was on decreasing infiltration into Kashmir and the state election. These objectives could be potentially achieved, at least temporarily, as opposed to the list of demands that India had put forth, especially those involving surrender of wanted terrorists. Thus the rigidity of New Delhi's initial objectives had been lessened.

Within six months of the troop pull back, India announced a series of measures to improve the situation and pave the way for meaningful talks. Regardless of the outcome of the series of talks, one can imagine the conciliatory moves by New Delhi as a continuum to the aggressive moves that preceded them, and as a carrot-and-stick policy as a whole.

## **CONCLUSIONS: CONSEQUENCES OF OPERATION PARAKRAM**

This case highlights several salient features of coercive diplomacy. First, it demonstrates how the two sides saw Operation Parakram as representing two different variants of

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<sup>230</sup> Zahid Hussain, 'The Long Road to Peace,' *Newsline*, June 2003.

<sup>231</sup> Jawad Hussain Qureshi, 'Earthquake Jihad: The Role of Jihadis and Islamist Groups after the October 2005 Earthquake,' Humanitarian Practice Network, (accessed from International Crisis Group), July 24, 2006, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4270&l=1>

coercive diplomacy. New Delhi was aiming for behavior change in Islamabad (Type B CD) by demanding that the Musharraf regime permanently end Pakistan's support for the Kashmir militancy. But for Islamabad, India's demands would have ultimately resulted in regime change (Type C CD), because by conceding to these demands, the Musharraf regime would have been under serious threat or being overthrown by fundamentalist forces and/or hard-line Islamist sections of the military. Thus, the coercer has to reconcile its demands in accordance with possible consequences in the target state.

Second, this case highlights the importance of moderation and modification of demands in coercive diplomacy. This helps tilt the balance of interests away from the target and increases the chances of successful coercion. Third, support from the international community for modified objectives (the Kashmir state election) provided a cover and a face-saving device for India to opt for reduced objectives. In coercive diplomacy, third party international actors can either play the role of 'spoiler' or 'facilitator.' The U.S. government, while sympathetic to India's cause adopted both roles at various points. It was a facilitator when it pressurized Pakistan to offer concessions, but it was a spoiler when it encouraged India to back down from the crisis. Its most crucial role as facilitator was its endorsement of the Kashmir election, which gave India the latitude to end the crisis. It must also be noted that one of India's original objectives behind Operation Parakram was to correct the perceived post-9/11 tilt toward Pakistan by the U.S. Thus, from the CD perspective, it could be speculated that one reason for India's coercive threats was to avoid a future situation in which the U.S. play a spoiler (such as the 1971 war).

India's coercive diplomacy through Operation Parakram also led to a reappraisal of political and military assumptions in the subcontinent. One major consequence is the realization in the Indian political establishment that coercive diplomacy involving large scale military deployment will not be effective in response to such militant attacks. Since Parakram ended, there have been several terror attacks but none of them provoked a similar response. These attacks occurred in various areas of symbolic importance, similar to the Parliament in New Delhi. The site of the disputed temple/mosque in Ayodhya was unsuccessfully attacked by a group of militants in July 2005. In October 2005 a crowded market in New Delhi was bombed. Following this, a temple in the pilgrimage town of

Varanasi was attacked by militants in March 2006. Finally, the Indian financial capital Mumbai suffered a series of train bombings in July 2006, killing almost 200 people.

After each of these incidents, New Delhi did place the blame on groups operating from across the border, especially Lashkar e-Toiba. However, no military responses were contemplated. Further, most CBMs introduced since 2002 have been unaffected by terrorist incidents. The most important of these is a ceasefire that has been in effect since November 2003, after almost 15 years of artillery exchanges across the Line of Control, and extending to Siachen glacier.

Another significant change is that New Delhi is attempting to make a better case to the international community against militant violence (whether state-sponsored or not). An indication of this is the willingness of India to share evidence on the July 2006 Mumbai blasts with Pakistan.<sup>232</sup> This would help to surmount the problem of the type of provocation, by demonstrating unambiguously the source of militant activity.

The lessons have not been restricted to political links between the two sides. Operation Parakram also acted as a catalyst for changes in Indian military strategy. The military deployment in Parakram as a part of coercive diplomacy involved movement of about 400,000 troops to forward areas, a process that took several weeks. Therefore, the element of surprise, if a military attack had to be carried out, was lost. To remedy this, in April 2004, the Indian military formulated a new offensive strategy, 'Cold Start,' which aims to build up the capacity to attack quickly across the Line of Control through mobile and compact integrated battle groups.<sup>233</sup> This is clearly a lesson learnt from Parakram in which the strike formations took too long to reach forward areas.

What this implies is that in a future crisis, New Delhi might side-step Parakram-style coercive diplomacy and launch penetrating strikes on terror camps in POK, or even deeper into Pakistani territory, provided the capability is developed. The objective here would be to strike and withdraw before the Pakistani military has a chance to react.

Thus Parakram is a relevant milestone, because the elements that brought about this crisis are still in place – militant violence, terror groups operating from Pakistan (whether

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<sup>232</sup> Amit Baruah, 'India, Pakistan to share evidence on 7/11 blasts,' *The Hindu*, August 1, 2006.

<sup>233</sup> Gurmeet Kanwal, 'Cold Start and Battle Groups for Offensive Operations,' Observer Research Foundation, *Strategic Trends*, June 5, 2006, Vol. IV, Issue 18.

government-sponsored or not), and nuclear deterrence, even though the two countries have embarked on a peace process. This case also demonstrated the involvement of the U.S. in political and military matters in South Asia, which has only been strengthened by the recent nuclear deal with India. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that in a similar crisis in future, all sides would be looking to learn from the lessons of Parakram, and act accordingly.

**Table 4: South Asia - Summary of arguments**

<b>Factors affecting coercive diplomacy</b>	<b>Consequence</b>
<b>Perceptions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Indian self-perception of a soft/weak state</li> <li>- Pakistani perception that India had not reconciled to partition and wanted to destroy it.</li> </ul>	<p>India's counter-terrorist strategy had to be more assertive, leading to coercive measures.</p> <p>Led to resistance to Indian coercion.</p>
<b>Objectives (Indian)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Magnitude of objectives very high</li> <li>- Too many specific objectives</li> </ul>	<p>Asymmetry of motivation balanced in Pakistan's favor</p> <p><b>Unintended consequence</b> – The multiplicity of objectives allowed India to modify and pick-and-choose some lesser objectives at a later stage to facilitate an honorable end to the stand-off.</p>
<b>Credibility of India's threats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low credibility due to nuclear deterrence and Pakistani statements that they would use them</li> <li>- Problems with India's conventional threat capability.</li> </ul>	<p>Indian military remained mobilized for ten months, which removed any element of surprise, which is crucial to CD.</p>
<b>Internal factors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Domestic politics in India</li> <li>- Gujarat riots</li> <li>- Elections in Kashmir</li> </ul>	<p>Led to a high magnitude of objectives</p> <p>Riots gave Musharraf an argument against India.</p> <p>Elections in Kashmir enabled India to modify its objectives in Parakram.</p>
<b>International Strategic Environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- U.S. concerns that South Asia is a nuclear flashpoint.</li> <li>- U.S. concerned that the standoff would adversely effect operations in Afghanistan</li> </ul>	<p>U.S. forced Musharraf to make to public speeches condemning terrorism in Kashmir.</p> <p>U.S. got India to make secret deal on Kashmir negotiations at a later stage.</p> <p>U.S. also endorsed Kashmir election to enable India to get some positive recognition enabling the change in objectives.</p>

### **3.0 OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM IN AFGHANISTAN – FAILURE OF U.S. COERCIVE DIPLOMACY?**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Soon after the September 11 attacks, the U.S. government concluded that it had been masterminded by Al Qaeda head Osama bin Laden. Hours after the attacks, President Bush announced what was subsequently known as a key component of the Bush doctrine, saying, “We will make no distinction between those who planned these attacks and those who harbor them.”<sup>1</sup> The U.S. then set out to apprehend bin Laden from his base in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. He had moved there in 1996 after being expelled from Sudan. In his second tenure in the region, bin Laden built up a sophisticated network of terrorist training camps and fundraising operations. Sheltered by the isolated Taliban, he was able to plan the 1998 embassy bombings, the USS Cole attack and the 9/11 plot.

After 9/11, Washington exerted pressure on the Taliban to surrender bin Laden. This coercive process was carried out for almost a month as U.S. forces started arriving in the region to carry out Washington’s military threats. The Taliban refused to give him up and on Oct. 7<sup>th</sup> the U.S. launched air strikes which were combined with a ground campaign led by the Northern Alliance. Eventually the Taliban was overthrown, and an interim government, dominated by the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance, was installed in Kabul.

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<sup>1</sup> Bob Woodward, *Bush at War*, (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster), pg. 30.



This chapter contends that the episode was a failure of U.S. coercive diplomacy because the demands put forth to the Taliban (surrender of bin Laden and end to terror camps) were not conceded. Throughout the period of coercion, military forces kept gathering in the region, prepared to attack the Taliban. This does not necessarily mean that U.S. forces would have attacked even if the Taliban had fulfilled all U.S. demands. It is also plausible that the movement of U.S. troops in the region was to ensure that the Taliban's possible compliance was full and without any loopholes, especially the task of shutting down terror camps.

As the following pages demonstrate, the ambiguity over Washington's agenda of regime change in Afghanistan precludes any conclusion that the U.S. intended to go to war whether the Taliban conceded or not. Only after its threats failed, did the U.S. act to carry out its threats and try to fulfill its objectives.

## Archetype

This case is a prominent example of coercion on a state sponsor of terrorism, which also happens to be a radical fundamentalist group. It shows the limitations of coercing a target with vastly differing belief systems. It is also an interesting case in which the entity responsible for the provocation (bin Laden) is different from the target of coercion (Taliban). But more importantly, this is a crucial case because of the rise of terrorism as a security threat. Though state-sponsorship is not as prevalent as it was some years ago, it still continues; Iran being a notable example. Fundamentalist groups are also gaining strength in several regions such as Somalia while in Afghanistan the Taliban is experiencing a resurgence. This is also a crucial case because it highlights the issue of perception gaps when it comes to cultural belief systems, something that was not really covered by traditional research on CD, though the issue of rationality has been discussed in several cases.

This case study is a relevant example of two important issues of international politics – (a) how to deal with weak, fragmented states? and (b) how to deal effectively with cultural, ethnic, and religious priorities of adversaries? The broader question then

becomes – if the adversary displays the above mentioned characteristics, under what circumstances does coercive diplomacy work?

In this chapter, I ask why U.S. coercive diplomacy was unsuccessful; why the Taliban resisted U.S. demands? Recent research has focused on inaccurate cultural perceptions of the Taliban in the minds of U.S. policymakers. Briefly, this view holds that Washington had an inaccurate image of the Taliban, which placed great importance on Pashtunwali, the Pashtun tribal code according to which, the Taliban could not surrender its guest, i.e., bin Laden. Thus U.S. decision-making did not take into account how important a set of customs could be to the Taliban leadership.

However, further investigations suggest that while Pashtunwali was the main reason why the Taliban resisted, other factors also contributed to this stance. In particular, the Taliban's close financial and military ties to Al Qaeda and Mullah Omar's personal relationship to bin Laden helped strengthen the Taliban leadership's resolve to resist. Furthermore, even though Washington's explicit objectives were the capture of bin Laden and the destruction of the Al Qaeda terror network, for the Taliban this was taken to imply a regime change agenda.

Following a brief background to U.S. attempts in the nineties to capture bin Laden, I examine Operation Enduring Freedom as a failed case of coercive diplomacy through five main variables – Perceptions, Objectives, Credibility of threats, Internal factors, and the International strategic environment. These factors take into account the various elements of coercive diplomacy, such as asymmetry of motivation, magnitude of demands, image of war, domestic and international support, among others.

## Chronology of events

Osama bin Laden had been based in Afghanistan intermittently throughout the eighties during the mujahideen struggle against Soviet occupation. After Soviet forces left Afghanistan he went back to his home country, Saudi Arabia, and in 1991 he went to Sudan, from where he was expelled in 1996. Bin Laden returned to Afghanistan in 1996, just as the Taliban was starting to take control of the country. The Taliban had arisen two years earlier in southern Afghanistan and attracted Pashtun recruits from seminaries in

Pakistan and from amongst Afghan refugees in the country. It was discreetly supported by the Pakistani government which was disillusioned by the failure of its long-time protégé, Pashtun leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar of the Hezb-i-Islami.<sup>2</sup>

In October 1996, bin Laden declared jihad, or holy war, against the U.S., and in February 1998, he issued a fatwa stating it was the religious duty of Muslims to kill Americans everywhere. In August 1998, U.S. embassies in Nairobi (Kenya) and Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania) were hit by massive bomb blasts which killed over 300 people. Following this, Washington retaliated by attacking suspected bin Laden and Al Qaeda facilities in Afghanistan and Sudan. However, these attacks failed to hit bin Laden or the Al Qaeda leadership. In the years preceding 9/11, the U.S. made several attempts to have bin Laden extradited to face trial for his involvement in the 1998 embassy bombings. The United Nations Security Council imposed sanctions under resolutions 1333 and 1267, demanding that the Taliban hand over bin Laden and shut down terror camps.<sup>3</sup> But this was consistently refused by Mullah Omar, the Taliban leader. In an interview in July 2000, he stated that, “extraditing Osama bin Laden, who fought jihad against the communists during their occupation of Afghanistan, is tantamount to leaving a pillar of our religion.”<sup>4</sup>

The Taliban suggested that bin Laden’s fate could be decided by Islamic scholars from Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, and one more country at a conference. These options were rejected by the U.S. According to Washington, such a conference of the ulema<sup>5</sup> could only be accepted if it provided the Taliban with the cover to accept and implement UN Security Council resolutions by surrendering bin Laden.<sup>6</sup> The U.S. government refused to accept the possible decisions by the ulema in place of the Taliban’s compliance with the resolutions and U.S. demands.

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<sup>2</sup> For rise of the Taliban, see Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban*, (New York, NY: I.B. Tauris, 2002), pp. 25-30 & Stephen Tanner, *Afghanistan*, (New York, NY: Da Capo Press, 2002), pp. 279-285.

<sup>3</sup> Resolution 1267 (October 1999) imposed a limited air and financial assets embargo on the Taliban, and Resolution 1333 (December 2000) imposed an air and arms embargo and froze fund of the bin Laden network. See <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/committees/1267/1267ResEng.htm>

<sup>4</sup> ‘Afghanistan: Taliban leader Mulla Omar,’ *The Pakistan Newswire*, July 28, 2000 (Lexis-Nexis).

<sup>5</sup> Ulema refers to learned interpreters of Islamic law (Sharia). Mullahs are clerics who lead prayers at mosques and also perform religious ceremonies. In general ulemas are higher than mullahs in the religious hierarchy.

<sup>6</sup> Declassified State Department document, February 2000, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB134/Doc%2015.pdf>

The Taliban leadership also asserted that the U.S. produce evidence linking bin Laden unequivocally to the embassy bombings and even then he would be tried by the Supreme Court of Afghanistan.<sup>7</sup> In the late nineties, several Taliban officials stated that they had seriously considered Saudi and U.S. demands to expel bin Laden, but (according to the Taliban), they had to discount this option because bin Laden commanded popular support among the Afghan people for his role in the anti-Soviet struggle.<sup>8</sup> But while the U.S. worked to apprehend bin Laden from Afghanistan during the nineties, it continued to tacitly tolerate the Taliban's control of most of the country. In fact it provided the Taliban with \$43 million to combat drug production in the country in early 2001.<sup>9</sup> Thus stabilization of the country (despite widespread human rights abuses by the Taliban) and Washington's anti-drug trafficking agenda brought in a less than forceful anti-Taliban policy in the pre-9/11 period. This of course changed after 9/11.

## OBJECTIVES

The theory of coercive diplomacy stresses the importance of magnitude of demands to the success of the strategy. Briefly, it states that if the magnitude of demands encroaches on the target's basic national interests, the chances of successful coercion decreases. This section therefore asks – Did U.S. demands encroach on fundamental interests of the Taliban? Here fundamental interests would naturally include regime survival (from the Taliban perspective). It must be noted that even if explicit U.S. demands did not involve regime change in Kabul, what was crucial was the perception among the Taliban of the nature of U.S. demands and the consequences of U.S. military strategy.

The Taliban's primary objective after it came to power in 1996 was to ensure survival of the regime and extend its rule to those parts still under control of the Northern Alliance. Even after the Taliban's rise to power in 1996, the regime and the opposition forces were locked in a constant struggle. By 1998, the Taliban controlled about 80% of

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<sup>7</sup> 'Taliban ready to solve Afghanistan issue,' *The Pakistan Newswire*, November 30, 2000 (Lexis-Nexis).

<sup>8</sup> Declassified State Department document, October 1998,  
<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB134/Doc%209.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Robert Scheer, 'Bush's Faustian deal with the Taliban,' *The Los Angeles Times*, May 22, 2001.

the country after it captured the important northern cities of Mazar-e-Sharif and Bamyán, which had been controlled by Uzbek and Hazara forces respectively. Subsequently, anti-Taliban forces under leaders such as the Tajik Ahmed Shah Masood and the Uzbek warlord General Rashid Dostum came together in December 1998 to form the United Front for the Liberation of Afghanistan (commonly known as the Northern Alliance) to dislodge the Taliban.<sup>10</sup> In fact, just before 9/11, in June 2001, the Taliban launched a massive offensive with 35,000 troops against the Northern Alliance/United Front forces outside Kabul and in northeastern Afghanistan.<sup>11</sup>

U.S. objectives in Afghanistan prior to 9/11 revolved around the extradition of Osama bin Laden. Thus the objectives, while, in accordance with U.S. national interests, were not necessarily contradictory to the basic national interests of the Taliban. By the late nineties, the Taliban was isolated internationally and was widely criticized for the fundamentalist nature of the regime. Nevertheless, during Washington's attempts to extricate bin Laden from Afghanistan prior to 9/11, the focus was nowhere on bringing about regime change in Kabul, though the U.S. was highly critical of the Taliban's repressive policies.

After 9/11, the Washington intensified the hunt for bin Laden and in the process put renewed pressure on the Taliban. Addressing a joint session of Congress on September 20, 2001, President Bush condemned the Taliban for its repressive policies and association with Al Qaeda, but he stopped short of overtly threatening regime change. The closest he came to suggesting overthrow was when he stated that, "they (Taliban) will hand over the terrorists or they will share their fate."<sup>12</sup> Two days later, Secretary of State Colin Powell also had an ambiguous response, stating that, "With respect to the nature of the regime in Afghanistan, that is not uppermost in our minds right now. It wasn't 15 days ago, and it isn't right now, except to the extent that the Taliban regime continues to support Osama bin Laden."<sup>13</sup> White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer also stated that the administration's

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<sup>10</sup> Neamatollah Nojumi, *The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan*, (New York, NY: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 166-170.

<sup>11</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban*, pg. xiv.

<sup>12</sup> Transcript of President Bush's address to joint session of Congress, September 20, 2001, CNN.com, <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/20/gen.bush.transcript/>.

<sup>13</sup> 'Text: ABC's 'This Week',' *The Washington Post*, September 23, 2001, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/abctext092301.html>

objective was ending terrorism and not deposing anyone from power.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, the U.S. position was that it would consider regime change in Kabul (i.e., type ‘c’ coercive diplomacy) only if the Taliban refused to give in.

Throughout the standoff, the Taliban leadership insisted that the U.S. provide proof of bin Laden’s complicity in the 9/11 attacks. But even if convincing evidence was presented, their position was that he would be tried only in Afghanistan. This was unacceptable to the U.S. which wanted to capture bin Laden and destroy his terror camps. But the Taliban insisted that there were no such camps were being run and therefore Washington’s demands to shut them down were meaningless.<sup>15</sup> This suggests that (a) the Taliban did not regard these camps as ‘terrorist,’ and (b) because of this reason, any action the Taliban did take would not necessarily be trusted by the U.S.

The Bush administration wanted complete access to these terror camps to make sure that they could not be used in future. Thus the objective was not just to punish bin Laden and the Al Qaeda network for 9/11 but also to permanently neutralize Afghanistan as a future base for global terrorism. On the other hand, whatever concessions the Taliban offered were mainly concerned with punishing bin Laden, provided the U.S. offered incontrovertible evidence of his guilt. Even if this evidence was provided, the Taliban stated that bin Laden would be tried in Afghanistan in an Islamic manner.<sup>16</sup> A key contextual variable – type of provocation – suggests that coercive diplomacy is more difficult if it involves the target’s support for terrorist activity because of the difficulty for the coercer in establishing international legitimacy and pinpointing the source of the attack. In this case, while the U.S. stance on the Taliban acquired international legitimacy the Taliban tried to manipulate ambiguity by asking for proof. And in fact for a short period after 9/11, the U.S. State Department also raised the evidence issue.

Nevertheless, in the weeks after 9/11, the U.S. did not overtly espouse regime change as its priority. The Bush administration’s foreign policy agenda prior to 9/11 had pointedly eschewed nation-building and criticized the Clinton administration’s involvement in such exercises. As part of this coercive exercise, U.S. policy against the

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<sup>14</sup> ‘US: No negotiations with the Taliban,’ *The Pakistan Newswire*, September 22, 2001.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Taliban again reject US demand of disbanding Al-Qaida, handing over of Bin Laden,’ *The Pakistan Newswire*, October 7, 2001.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Osama to be given Islamic trial: Taliban,’ *The Pakistan Newswire*, October 5, 2001.

Taliban was restricted to capturing bin Laden and destroying Afghan terror camps. A week before the attack began, White House Chief of Staff, Andrew Card said that the administration did not favor any specific group to rule Afghanistan and stated, “we are not about nation-building... We want to make sure the Taliban is not a government that will aid and abet terrorists.”<sup>17</sup>

However, such statements from the highest levels of the U.S. government were not necessarily taken at face value by the Taliban leadership, especially Mullah Omar. After 9/11, Omar stated that the U.S. was using bin Laden “as a pretext for attacking Afghanistan,” and also that since bin Laden’s communication facilities had been withdrawn and he was cut off from the outside world, he could not have planned the attacks.<sup>18</sup> Omar stated that, “our Islamic state is the true Islamic system in the world, and for this reason the enemies of our country look at us as a thorn in their eye and seek different excuses to finish us off. Osama is one of these.”<sup>19</sup>

Therefore, there are indications that Taliban leaders assumed U.S. objectives behind this coercion to include regime change in Kabul. As early as the end of September 2001, there was increasing discussion on the return of the exiled Afghan King Zahir Shah to some unspecified role in his country, which clearly suggested that regime change was being considered by some in the international community. Mullah Amir Khan Muttaki, Taliban Minister of Education, stated that after the long fight against Soviet forces they would not permit Zahir Shah to return, and that bin Laden would not be surrendered.<sup>20</sup> There was thus an implied link between denying the deposed king entry into Afghanistan and the fate of bin Laden. Mullah Omar also stated in a rare interview that Zahir Shah would be an ‘imposed puppet’ and the country did not need him.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> ‘Text: Andrew Card on ‘Fox News Sunday,’’ Washingtonpost.com, September 30, 2001, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/foxtext\\_093001.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/foxtext_093001.html)

<sup>18</sup> ‘Taliban chief seeks talks with the U.S. to ward off attack,’ *The Pakistan Newswire*, September 19, 2001, (Lexis-Nexis).

<sup>19</sup> Michael Griffin, *Reaping the Whirlwind: Afghanistan, Al Qa’ida and the Holy War*, (London, UK: Pluto Press, 2003), pg. 271.

<sup>20</sup> ‘The noose tightens,’ *The Observer*, October 7, 2001, <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/waronterrorism/story/0,,564785,00.html>

<sup>21</sup> ‘No room for ex-king, says Taliban,’ *The Tribune*, September 30, 2001, <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2001/20010930/world.htm#2>

To a large extent this fear in the Taliban leadership was not unfounded. While public statements by the Bush administration centered around the objectives of apprehending bin Laden and destroying Al Qaeda terror camps in Afghanistan, military plans included paving the way for the Taliban's downfall. Even if the U.S. did not publicly announce the removal of the Taliban as a major objective, U.S. military strategy was shaped in such a way that such an eventuality was entirely possible. According to U.S. intelligence officials, the best fighters on the Taliban side were Al Qaeda militants, who would be natural targets of U.S. attacks.<sup>22</sup> Even if the Taliban conceded, a key U.S. demand was the destruction of Afghanistan's terror camps, implying neutralization of Al Qaeda fighters in the country. This would have again impacted negatively on Al Qaeda firepower and would have severely degraded the Taliban's war fighting capability against the Northern Alliance, which was already gearing up to play a major role in the ground war. This was therefore a clear example of non-articulated objectives that are assumed by the adversary.

In fact, plans considered and decided by the U.S. military involved intense air attacks on Taliban positions, combined with a ground offensive led by the Northern Alliance.<sup>23</sup> However, while the Alliance was to be an important component, it was part of an overall strategy where 'applying pressure' was the key objective.<sup>24</sup> The U.S. wanted to avoid a scenario where the Alliance rapidly took over the country exploiting the air campaign. This scenario would have risked starting a civil war with the predominantly Pashtun population of southern Afghanistan.<sup>25</sup>

Once the air campaign started on October 7th, in its initial stages, the bombardment by U.S. and British aircraft was restricted to Taliban airfields and artillery units in northern and eastern Afghanistan, while the Northern Alliance agreed to postpone the inevitable assault on the capital, Kabul.<sup>26</sup> Such an attempt would come after an interim government to replace the Taliban was formed, to avoid large scale bloodshed in the capital. The U.S.

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<sup>22</sup> 'The noose tightens,' *The Observer*, October 7, 2001,

<sup>23</sup> 'The rout of the Taliban,' *The Observer*, November 18, 2001,  
<http://observer.guardian.co.uk/afghanistan/story/0,,596923,00.html>

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Peter Baker, Molly Moore, & Kamran Khan, 'Rebels delay move against Kabul,' *The Washington Post*, October 11, 2001.



agreed to this under pressure from Pakistan which did not want the Northern Alliance to replace the Taliban. Even as the initial air campaign began, there was restraint in terms of the military objectives. According to one military account, the air campaign intended to provide “air support for friendly forces working with the Northern Alliance and other opposition forces in order to set the conditions for regime removal and long-term regional stability.”<sup>27</sup> Even in this official statement, the objective was to create conditions that could possibly lead to regime change if required, but not necessarily aim for regime change as the main objective. Further, according to other official sources, one of the main objectives in the initial stages of the campaign was to force bin Laden and the Al Qaeda leadership to reveal their whereabouts, so that U.S. operatives already in Afghanistan could then target them.<sup>28</sup> This would have also demonstrated to the Islamic world that Washington’s objectives were limited and did not involve subduing the whole country.<sup>29</sup>

But while stated U.S. objectives were not clear whether regime change was on the agenda, once the military threats were carried out, they would have created conditions that could have led to the downfall of the Taliban. The Northern Alliance might have applied some restraint in the initial stages, but it was clearly preparing for a major offensive sooner or later. By the second week of October, it had already captured several northern districts and was making a move to cut off important Taliban supply routes so that northern Afghanistan could then fall to Alliance forces.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, it was clear that whatever restraint was being displayed, it was temporary. From the Taliban perspective, as the campaign progressed, the image of war was preferable, because in effect, regime change was de facto now on the agenda.

As the attacks began, conflicting signals were sent out by the Taliban leadership. The day after the attacks began, its ambassador to Pakistan Mullah Abbas Salaam Zaef said that the Taliban was willing to detain and prosecute bin Laden in accordance with Islamic law if the U.S. formally requested this.<sup>31</sup> This was a softening of the earlier offer in

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<sup>27</sup> Benjamin S. Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2005), pg. 83.

<sup>28</sup> Michael Duffy, ‘War on all fronts,’ *Time*, October 15, 2001.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Peter Baker and Susan B. Glasser, ‘Rebels capture northern areas, cut off Taliban supply route,’ *The Washington Post*, October 10, 2001.

<sup>31</sup> ‘Taliban agree on Osama trial, if requested by US,’ *The Pakistan Newswire*, October 7, 2001.

that Taliban did not ask for prior evidence from the U.S. But within a few days, Taliban spokesman Abdul Hai Mutmaen stated that since the U.S. had launched air attacks all restrictions on bin Laden were lifted and he could now fight a holy war against the U.S.<sup>32</sup> Soon after, a repeat offer by Taliban Deputy Prime Minister Haji Abdul Kabir to discuss surrendering bin Laden to a third country if evidence was provided was rejected by President Bush who stated that the U.S. would not negotiate with the Taliban. While the Taliban was willing to discuss the issue, it was obvious that its only concessions were variants of the original offer to try bin Laden in either Afghanistan or in a third country, preferably in accordance with Islamic laws. The U.S. maintained its stance that this was unacceptable.

Other elements that favored successful coercive diplomacy were also in place. U.S. actions conveyed a clear sense of urgency to the Taliban. Addressing a joint session of Congress on September 20, 2001, President Bush stated that the Taliban had to surrender bin Laden and close down terror camps immediately, adding that, “the Taliban must act, and immediately.”<sup>33</sup> This urgency was also conveyed through other important actors, such as Pakistan, which attempted to impress upon the Taliban regime the importance of U.S. demands as well as the seriousness of Washington’s threats. While there was a sense of urgency to U.S. demands, the administration was willing to wait a certain amount of time to allow coercive diplomacy to take effect. But this time period was not indefinite. According to one senior U.S. intelligence official, Washington was willing to wait for the Taliban to concede; however, for political reasons military action could wait only till Thanksgiving. He stated that, “what is clear is that we need some blood on the sand by November 22.”<sup>34</sup> As it happens, the actual period of time the U.S. was willing to give the Taliban was much less, as the air campaign began on October 7<sup>th</sup>.

One tactic employed by Mullah Omar within a week after 9/11 was to try to change the target of U.S. demands by stating that bin Laden’s fate would be decided by the

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<sup>32</sup> Unspecified headline, *The Pakistan Newswire*, October 10, 2001.

<sup>33</sup> Transcript of President Bush’s address to joint session of Congress, September 20, 2001, CNN.com, <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/20/gen.bush.transcript/>

<sup>34</sup> ‘The noose tightens,’ *The Observer*, October 7, 2001.

Shoora, the council of Islamic clerics which would issue a fatwa.<sup>35</sup> The Shoora decided to ask bin Laden to leave Afghanistan voluntarily and save the Afghan people from U.S. attacks, while rejecting the U.S. demand to hand him over.<sup>36</sup> Voluntary departure from Afghanistan was not the same as surrendering bin Laden. Afghanistan is situated in a region replete with rugged and remote mountainous areas where the Al Qaeda leader could hide out. Furthermore, at that point, bin Laden had about 3,000 well-armed Al Qaeda militants and also commanded the support of many Taliban soldiers.<sup>37</sup> Thus from the U.S. perspective, the Shoora's decision did not fulfill its demands, and Washington rejected it.<sup>38</sup>

To influence eventual U.S. objectives, Pakistani agencies also tried to push forward moderate Taliban leaders who might be given a role in the future regime, so that Islamabad could retain its influence. Thus, by now (October second week), the Taliban regime, as exemplified by the Mullah Omar clique was rejected by Pakistan and according to one Pakistani intelligence official, "an overthrow of the present Taliban regime in Afghanistan is now an ISI objective. There is no doubt that the ISI now wants Mullah Mohammad Omar and his cronies to go."<sup>39</sup>

However, along with the demands that the U.S. presented to the Taliban, no substantive concessions (carrots) were offered. Washington did not offer financial aid (as it had to Pakistan after 9/11), nor did it offer any form of diplomatic recognition to the regime if it gave up bin Laden. After the Taliban took over Kabul in 1996, it had sought diplomatic recognition for its regime from countries around the world, including the U.S, and also tried to get economic sanctions lifted.<sup>40</sup> In fact, when the Shoora met in late September to consider bin Laden's fate, it also demanded diplomatic recognition for the Taliban, removal of economic sanctions, and an end to assistance for the Northern

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<sup>35</sup> Rajiv Chandrasekaran, 'Afghan people are urged to prepare for a holy war,' *The Washington Post*, September 18, 2001, pg. A01.

<sup>36</sup> 'US rejects Shoora's decree on Osama bin Laden,' *The Pakistan Newswire*, September 20, 2001.

<sup>37</sup> Rajiv Chandrasekaran, 'Afghan people are urged to prepare for a holy war.'

<sup>38</sup> 'US rejects Shoora's decree on Osama bin Laden,' *The Pakistan Newswire*, September 20, 2001.

<sup>39</sup> Peter Baker, Molly Moore, and Kamran Khan, 'Rebels delay move against Kabul,' *The Washington Post*, October 11, 2001.

<sup>40</sup> Neamatollah Nojumi, *The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan*, pp. 172-174.

Alliance.<sup>41</sup> However, Washington's coercive diplomacy did not include any concessions on these issues.

The only 'carrots' the U.S. did offer were air drops of food and medicine as the air campaign began. Just days before the campaign started, President Bush ordered a further \$320 million in food and medicine to be shipped to Afghanistan, stating that, "this is our way of saying that while we firmly and strongly oppose the Taliban regime, we are friends of the Afghan people."<sup>42</sup> Further, in the run up to the air campaign, Central Intelligence Agency operatives were secreted into Afghanistan with large sums of money to distribute to tribal leaders who could provide assistance and also help pinpoint bin Laden's location. However, such concessions are not necessarily the kind that favor successful coercive diplomacy as they are not even aimed at the main target. Food and medicine were meant for the Afghan people, not the Taliban leadership, who would actually make the decision whether or not to surrender bin Laden. Concessions as part of coercive diplomacy are meant to create an environment where the target can consider the demands more favorably. In this case the carrots were meant to neutralize the ill effects of the air bombardment and to salvage some goodwill among the Afghan people.

## The role of reassurances

Reassurances played a key role in determining the Taliban's attitudes toward U.S. demands. As stated in chapter 1, reassurances are an important component of compellent as well as deterrent threats. While the U.S. never approved of the Taliban regime it gave mixed signals regarding its acceptability. According to one opinion, prior to 9/11, Washington was more concerned about stopping Pakistan's nuclear weapons program than getting Islamabad to stop support for the Taliban and facilitate its removal from power.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, during the late nineties, there were numerous diplomatic contacts between

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<sup>41</sup> Michael Griffin, *Reaping the Whirlwind: Afghanistan, Al Qaeda and the Holy War*, pg. 271.

<sup>42</sup> Michael Duffy, 'War on all fronts,' *Time*, October 15, 2001.

<sup>43</sup> Feroz Hassan Khan & Christopher Clary, 'Dissuasion and Regional Allies: The Case of Pakistan,' *Strategic Insights*, Vol. III, Issue 10, October 2004.

the U.S. and the Taliban, mainly on the issue of terrorism and bin Laden. These documents show that the U.S. was in favor of continuing dialogue with the Taliban and warned the group that associating with bin Laden would be detrimental to the Taliban's interests.<sup>44</sup>

Further, even though bin Laden was still entrenched in his camps in Afghanistan, the U.S. provided the Taliban with \$43 million to combat drug production in the country in early 2001.<sup>45</sup> While this is a very significant 'carrot,' in the absence of any reciprocal gestures by the Taliban on handing over bin Laden or even neutralizing his activities, this seems to have been a less than hard-line position by the U.S. It also shows the communication of mixed signals by the U.S. After 9/11: while the U.S. demanded that the Taliban surrender bin Laden and destroy bin Laden, there was no unambiguous declaration of an assurance that regime change was not on the U.S. agenda.

As mentioned earlier, White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card did say during the period of coercion that the U.S. was not interested in nation-building and wanted an end to Afghanistan as a safe haven for terrorists. While this does not mention regime change, there is no unambiguous disavowal of this agenda. Therefore, there was no clear reassurance conveyed to the Taliban that its regime was secure, leading to the group's insecurity about U.S. intentions. In the absence of such credible reassurances, the Taliban leaders had to rely on their perceptions and calculations of what U.S. moves would eventually amount to.

## Implications:

### **How did the characteristics of U.S. objectives impact on the success or failure of coercive diplomacy?**

The analysis in this section shows that the asymmetry of motivation was not overwhelmingly in favor of the U.S. In any episode of coercive diplomacy, the more important the stakes of one side, the higher its inclination to resist or coerce. Further, the coercer can induce a favorable asymmetry of motivation in two ways – (a) first, as mentioned earlier, by restricting its demands only to objectives that deal with its own vital

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<sup>44</sup> See for example, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB134/Doc%209.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> Robert Scheer, 'Bush's Faustian deal with the Taliban,' *The Los Angeles Times*, May 22, 2001.

interests and do not contradict the fundamental interests of the adversary, and (b) through carrots that lessen the target's motivation.<sup>46</sup> Another key factor favoring successful coercive diplomacy is clarity of settlement conditions. If the target is reassured over specific terms for ending the crisis, coercive diplomacy is strengthened.<sup>47</sup> However, in this particular case, regime change was hardly an acceptable settlement condition for the Taliban, which made the process more difficult.

The demands that the U.S. put forward were in line with the ultimatum variant of coercive diplomacy. This variant has three steps – (1) a demand, (2) a time limit or a clear sense of urgency, and (3) a credible threat of punishment if the demands are not met.<sup>48</sup> While the U.S. did not announce a clear deadline, there was an obvious sense of urgency which convinced the Taliban that if any concessions were to be offered, this had to be done right then. However, this variant also has considerable risks of failure and the Taliban's resistance was in line with three out of the four main risks enunciated by George and Simons.<sup>49</sup>

The first risk is that a target might decide that conceding to the demands is dishonorable.<sup>50</sup> As the section on perceptions and assumption of rationality demonstrates, for the Taliban leadership, adherence to the Pashtunwali code was of paramount importance, given that the code itself is based on the overall concept of honor. The second risk of the ultimatum is that even if the target takes the threat seriously, it might still prefer to go to war. In this case the Taliban took seriously Washington's capacity and willingness to use force but preferred to resist and opt for war. Finally, the target might try to lessen the coercive threats by ambiguous acceptance of the demands. The Taliban attempted this also through its decision to ask the Shoorā to make the decision on bin Laden's fate and also through its counter proposals to try bin Laden within Afghanistan. But this was not

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<sup>46</sup> Alexander L. George & William E. Simons, 'Findings and Conclusions,' Alexander L. George and William E. Simons (ed.) *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, (Boulder, Co: Westview Press, 1994), pg. 281.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, pg. 286.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, pg. 274.

<sup>49</sup> The fourth risk specified is that the target might consider the threat a bluff and leave it up to the coercer to decide whether to carry out the threat, see George & Simons, 'Findings and Conclusions,' pg. 276. In this case the Taliban did not see U.S. threats as a bluff.

<sup>50</sup> For a description of the risks of ultimatum see George & Simons, 'Findings and Conclusions,' pg. 276.

enough for Washington because it might have left the terrorist infrastructure in place, even if Bin Laden was somehow neutralized.

This demonstrates that the U.S. had significant multiple objectives against the Taliban after 9/11, even if the regime change option was discounted. Merely securing the capture of Bin Laden was not enough; it was integrally linked to the destruction of Afghanistan as a terror base. Washington also did not modify any of its objectives, as suggested by the Taliban, through its proposals for an Islamic trial for Bin Laden. Furthermore, as already stated, Washington offered no reassurances to the Taliban that their regime would be maintained.

**Table 5: Taliban case - objectives**

<b>U.S. Objectives</b>	<b>Coercive diplomacy result</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ambiguous/mixed signals by U.S.</li> <li>- No reassurances</li> <li>- U.S. military strategy would have led to gains for Northern Alliance</li> </ul>	<p>Taliban convinced that ultimate U.S. objective was regime change (Type C CD)</p> <p>Asymmetry of motivation tilted in Taliban's favor.</p>

## **CREDIBILITY OF U.S. THREATS**

Credibility of threats depends on the capacity and resolve of the coercer to carry out its threats. It also depends on how seriously the target state takes these threats. Key questions here involve – was the coercer in a position to carry out its threats? Was there adequate domestic leadership and resolve? What capacity did the target have to defend itself effectively against the coercer's attacks? This section argues that even though the threats were credible enough and were backed with adequate international support, and were also taken seriously, nevertheless coercive diplomacy failed. This refers to the second risk of the ultimatum variant that is specified above, where the target considers the threats credible but prefers war anyway.

Soon after 9/11, the Bush administration prepared itself and the country for an aggressive response. President Bush told the American people that countering the terrorist network would require sacrifices by the military. After meeting military officials a few days after 9/11, he said, “I will not settle for a token act. Our response must be sweeping, sustained and effective. You will be asked for your patience, for the conflict will not be short. You will be asked for resolve, for the conflict will not be easy. You will be asked for your strength because the course to victory will be long.”<sup>51</sup> In another nationwide address, Bush stated, “we’re gonna get ‘em running, find ‘em and hunt ‘em down,” and was supported by a 91 percent approval rating.<sup>52</sup>

The determination to strike back was thus strong. After this attack on the American homeland, a spirit of bipartisanship and popular support emerged to back the administration in whatever counter-terrorist responses were undertaken. Within a week of the attack, the U.S. Congress passed a near unanimous joint resolution authorizing the president to use all required force to bring to justice the perpetrators of the September 11 attacks. The fact that this move came less than a year after a contentious presidential election showed strong collective domestic leadership.

Furthermore, soon after the attacks, the UN Security Council passed several resolutions condemning terrorism. The first one (resolution 1368) was passed on September 12, 2001, and it called for those responsible for the 9/11 attacks to be brought to justice and that all such terrorist attacks are a threat to international security. Subsequently, resolution 1373, passed on September 28<sup>th</sup>, obliged member states to combat all terror activities and networks and aimed to bolster the collective ability of states to fight terrorism. Therefore, there was also considerable measure of international legal legitimacy for the U.S. position.

The fact that some senior members of the administration favored a comprehensive attack on ‘rogue’ regimes and suspected terror bases around the world (such as Iraq), suggested that the administration was willing to seriously consider the strongest response possible, not just an air attack on Afghanistan. Therefore, key variables underlying

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<sup>51</sup> ‘Get ready for war, Bush tells America,’ *The Observer*, September 16, 2001.

<sup>52</sup> ‘The march to the brink of battle,’ *The Observer*, September 23, 2001.



successful coercive diplomacy – resolve, strong domestic leadership and popular support – were demonstrated.

The U.S. military geared up for possible military action and to back up coercive threats after 9/11. By October first week, American fighter aircraft were stationed in Tajikistan and airbases in Pakistan, and warships patrolled the Arabian Sea to act in support. There were initial hurdles to stationing U.S. military forces in the region. Countries that offered military logistical assistance wanted something in return. President Islam Karimov of Uzbekistan wanted the U.S. to effectively condone his regime's imprisonment of thousands of political prisoners. The government of Oman, an important transit point for U.S. forces, wanted a major arms deal, while the Musharraf regime in Islamabad wanted the U.S. to remove economic sanctions and resume aid. But despite these conditionalities Washington was able to get these crucial partners on board. This showed the importance it attached to this objective as well as the strong resolve.

The Taliban leaders and the population they controlled took U.S. military threats seriously. Their erstwhile allies in Islamabad informed them that if they did not surrender bin Laden, the U.S. would certainly attack.<sup>53</sup> Meanwhile, the Taliban leadership started preparing the Afghan people to face the U.S. attack. Deputy Taliban leader Mohammed Hasan Akhund stated on the official Voice of Shariat radio that, “if America attacks our homes it is necessary for all Muslims, especially Afghans, to wage a holy war.”<sup>54</sup> Further, thousands of Afghans started fleeing Kandahar and other Taliban-controlled cities towards the Pakistan border, in anticipation of the U.S. attack. Taliban units also deployed artillery and anti-aircraft guns on the borders with Tajikistan and Pakistan.

However, U.S. intelligence reports concluded that the quality of Taliban forces was much lower than previously assumed. The conventional wisdom had been that the Taliban consisted of battle-hardened veteran guerrilla fighters who had successfully defended themselves against all invaders. This revised intelligence assessment, especially an influential study prepared by a former Afghan army colonel,<sup>55</sup> only added to the credibility of U.S. threats (in U.S. perceptions).

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<sup>53</sup> Rajiv Chandrasekaran, ‘Afghan people are urged to prepare for a holy war.’

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> ‘The rout of the Taliban,’ *The Times*, November 18, 2001.

But this assessment did not necessarily imply that because of the high credibility of U.S. threats, the Taliban would hand over bin Laden. Nor did it mean that Washington had given up on coercing the Taliban. One indicator is that after the Musharraf regime reluctantly agreed to assist in operations in the region, at least two delegations of senior military and religious officials from Pakistan were sent to Afghanistan in order to convince the Taliban leadership to give up bin Laden.

### Implications:

#### **How did credibility of threats impact on the process of coercive diplomacy?**

As this section demonstrates, U.S. threats had high credibility. However, because the Taliban leadership was convinced that any military action that the U.S. did take would lead to regime change, it resisted Washington's demands. In coercive diplomacy if the image of war is too catastrophic for one side, its motivation to resist (if it is the target), or to apply further pressure (if it is the coercer) goes down. This leads to an advantageous position for the adversary. However, for the Taliban leadership, especially Mullah Omar, the image of war was not catastrophic and therefore a fight to death was preferred. This contributed to the failure of U.S. coercive diplomacy because of the refusal of the Taliban leadership to take U.S. military threats seriously.

Furthermore, despite the credibility of U.S. threats, the Taliban did not display any fear of unacceptable escalation and was willing to fight back. Considering that Afghanistan had gone through decades of civil war that had destroyed the country, there was not much left for the U.S. to threaten with destruction.<sup>56</sup> Thus, there was nothing for the U.S. to escalate to which the Taliban had not already experienced and overcome. If the target state fears escalation of violence to a much higher level by the coercer, it becomes more willing to concede. But about ten days after the bombing started, Omar was still exhorting his followers to fight on, and called upon Muslims around the world to continue a holy war

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<sup>56</sup> Shah M. Tarzi, 'Coercive Diplomacy and an 'Irrational' Regime: Understanding the American Confrontation with the Taliban,' *International Studies*, 42 (1), 2005, pp. 29-30.

against the U.S.<sup>57</sup> The Taliban leader was (publicly at least) willing to sacrifice his life for Islam<sup>58</sup> which showed that however potent U.S. threats were, they were incompatible with the Taliban leader's stated objectives.

From Omar's perspective, the shared experience of the senior Taliban leadership as part of the Mujahideen's fight against Soviet forces in the 1980s was another prominent reason for his seeming defiance in the face of overwhelming odds. Mullah Omar had himself been a senior Mujahideen commander, operating out of a strategically important base near Pakistan.<sup>59</sup> His wounds in the conflict, including the loss of an eye, substantially enhanced his credibility.<sup>60</sup> In an interview after the U.S. attack commenced, Omar vowed that the Taliban would inflict upon the U.S. "a much more bitter lesson" than that given to the Soviet Union in the 1980s.<sup>61</sup> In another interview days after the bombing started, Omar stated that, "as for those who strike against us now, they have to know that the struggling nature of the Afghans and the geography of Afghanistan make our country a grave for the invaders."<sup>62</sup> He also dismissed the growing strength of the opposition Northern Alliance stating that it would meet "the same fate as those who allied" with Soviet forces during the civil war.<sup>63</sup> It is perhaps with this legacy of anti-Soviet guerrilla warfare in mind that in late September 2001, Omar appointed a trusted aide, Jalaluddin Haqqani as commander of all Taliban forces. Haqqani had fought against Soviet forces and was also a member of a tribe that maintained large numbers of militia fighters in its ranks<sup>64</sup> (giving him substantial control over Taliban fighters).

This leads to the conclusion, at least in Mullah Omar's calculations, that the U.S. forces could be beaten back on account of the treacherous strategic geography of Afghanistan, denting the potency of U.S. coercive threats. And as the next section shows,

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<sup>57</sup> 'Mullah Omar urges Muslims to continue Jihad,' *The Financial Times* (Global News Wire), October 19, 2001.

<sup>58</sup> 'Mullah Omar vows to lay down life for Islam,' *The Pakistan Newswire*, October 13, 2001.

<sup>59</sup> Ralph Magnus & Eden Naby, *Afghanistan: Mullah, Marx, and Mujahid*, (Boulder, Co: Westview Press, 2002), pg. 181.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> 'US will suffer more than Russians: Mullah Omar,' *The Financial Times* (Global News Wire), October 15, 2001.

<sup>62</sup> 'My death won't end war: Omar,' *The Melbourne Herald Sun*, October 12, 2001.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> B. Muralidhar Reddy, 'Mullah Omar appoints commander-in-chief,' *The Hindu*, September 30, 2001.

the Taliban leadership's differing priorities were not taken into account by Washington's policymakers.

**Table 6: Taliban case - Credibility of threats**

<b>Credibility of threats</b>	<b>Coercive diplomacy result</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- U.S. threat credibility high</li> <li>- But Taliban convinced that regime change actual agenda.</li> <li>- Taliban leaders fought Soviet forces</li> </ul>	<p>Taliban's motivation to resist high Asymmetry of motivation tilted in Taliban's favor</p> <p>Confident of defeating U.S. forces, therefore determination to resist U.S. coercion high</p>

## PERCEPTIONS

Perceptions of the adversary, the situation, and one's own side provide the basis for specific coercive strategies. In this case, one U.S. intelligence assessment of the situation in the weeks after 9/11 concluded that because of the lack of integration between the Taliban and Al Qaeda the two groups would eventually go to war with each other, though this assessment did not specify whether this implied that bin Laden would be handed over.<sup>65</sup> Thus even within some U.S. intelligence agencies there was a faulty image and opinion of the cohesiveness of the Al Qaeda and Taliban alliance. As a later section states, while there were differences, the influence of Mullah Omar was overwhelming enough to counter any divisive tendencies.

A key conceptual issue highlighted in the theory of coercive diplomacy is the assumption of rationality on the part of the target. The implication is that a rational target will make decisions based on a cost benefit analysis that takes into account a preference order assumed by the coercer. When the coercer assumes that the target is a 'rational' decision-maker, it (the coercer) might not necessarily consider the nature of the target's

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<sup>65</sup> This analysis was included in a classified Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) document from September 2001. See B. Raman, 'Pakistan through the US looking glass,' *Asia Times*, September 20, 2003, [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South\\_Asia/EI20Df03.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/EI20Df03.html)

preferences.<sup>66</sup> What might be rational for the target in its own social and cultural milieu might not be considered rational by the coercer. The target's decision-making in that environment might be based on a set of preferences which it considers rational, but the coercer may not. And therefore, the coercer may apply a set of policies without taking this crucial difference into consideration.

Thus, the strategy of coercive diplomacy stresses that instead of assuming pure rationality on the part of the opponent, the coercer has to take into account cultural, psychological, and political factors.<sup>67</sup> But this was not necessarily the case in coercing the Taliban. The Taliban attached great importance in its policymaking to conservative Sunni Islamic law (Sharia) and Pashtunwali, the tribal code of the Pashtun people and tribes based in Afghanistan and northwest Pakistan. But while the U.S. issued its demands to the Taliban, there was no acknowledgement of the fact that the Taliban might view the issue differently, or might suggest other methods of bringing bin Laden to justice (such as trying him in a third country). Thus, there was no space for compromise, which might have accommodated the tribal sensibilities of the Taliban.

It is necessary to highlight the Taliban regime's stance on these two levels – on the basis of Islamic jurisprudence/Shariat and on the basis of Pashtunwali. Initially, Taliban leaders refused to hand over bin Laden on Islamic principles. In his response to President Bush's Congressional address on September 20, 2001, Taliban ambassador to Pakistan, Abdul Salam Zaeef said that handing over bin Laden or forcing him to move out of Pakistan would be an insult to Islam and the Shariat.<sup>68</sup>

Thus the focus initially was to invoke Islamic principles for not surrendering bin Laden to the U.S. Prior to Zaeef's statement, the Afghan Shoorā officially asked bin Laden to leave the country voluntarily. As an earlier section had noted, with increasing American pressure after 9/11, Mullah Omar gave the Shoorā (Council of the Ulema) responsibility for deciding bin Laden's fate. This did not meet the Bush administration's demands.

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<sup>66</sup> Michael Nicholson, *Rationality and the Analysis of International Conflict*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 50-51.

<sup>67</sup> Alexander L. George, 'Theory and Practice,' Alexander L. George and William E. Simons (ed.) *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, (Boulder, Co: Westview Press, 1994), pp. 19-20.

<sup>68</sup> 'Taliban refuse to hand over Osama to US,' *The Pakistan Newswire*, September 21, 2001.

Neither did the other Taliban suggestion that bin Laden be tried according to Islamic principles, as long as evidence of his complicity was provided.

Thus the Taliban, in its policymaking, cited Islamic religious principles, i.e., Sharia law, but was also influenced by Pashtunwali. The evolution of the Taliban stance shows how the intermingling of conservative Islamic principles and Pashtunwali lead to increasingly hard-line positions, culminating in the protection of bin Laden. The Taliban are adherents to the Deobandi stream of Sunni Islam that arose in British India in the nineteenth century as a reformist movement. After the creation of Pakistan in 1947, Deobandi madrasas proliferated in the country and also led to the creation of a political-religious movement, Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam (JUI).<sup>69</sup> JUI became one of the largest political parties in Pakistan and eventually a powerful supporter of the Taliban and was quite vocal in its backing after 9/11.

In the 1980s, JUI established thousands of madrasas in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Baluchistan for impoverished Pakistanis and Afghan refugees. However, mullahs at these madrasas had an agenda that was far from the reformist beginnings of the Deobandi creed.<sup>70</sup> Their teaching of the Sharia was heavily influenced by the Pashtunwali tribal code as well as by Saudi-sponsored Wahabi tenets. The Taliban arose from these institutions and combined radical teachings from the Wahabi doctrine with the strict Pashtunwali code and an extremist variant of the Deobandi stream. Through the JUI, the Taliban was also closely connected to extremist anti-Shia sectarian militant outfits such as Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) which had been involved in numerous acts of terror in Pakistan.<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, links between the Taliban and extremist Deobandi groups in Pakistan were also strengthened by the fact that several leaders of these groups belonged to the same Durrani Pashtun tribe present on both sides of the border.<sup>72</sup>

Pashtunwali consists of a social code under which tribal councils, or jirga, decide on cases and disputes based on traditional laws and customs.<sup>73</sup> The jurisdictional boundary

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<sup>69</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban*, pg. 89.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, pp. 89-90.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, pg. 92.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, and Shah M. Tarzi, 'Coercive Diplomacy and an 'Irrational' Regime: Understanding the American Confrontation with the Taliban,' pg. 38.

<sup>73</sup> For an analysis of Pashtunwali, see Anwar Syed, 'These 'codes of honour',', *Dawn*, April 24, 2004, <http://www.dawn.com/2004/04/25/op.htm>

between Sharia and Pashtunwali has never been clearly defined, though the Taliban's judgments and punishments were based largely on the latter.<sup>74</sup> At the root of all components of Pashtunwali lies the concept of honor. The main component relevant to this study is 'melmastia,' or hospitality. Melmastia has several aspects such as providing food and shelter to outsiders who seek it, but it also involves defending the guest, a responsibility termed 'nanawati.'<sup>75</sup> This clause was the basis for the invocation of Pashtunwali to shelter bin Laden.

But these two traditions (Sharia and Pashtunwali) do not necessarily coincide; in some matters they diverge strongly. Islamic law and Pashtunwali also differ on broader goals, with the Ulema (learned interpreters of the Sharia) favoring a movement away from tribal and ethnic loyalties toward a higher religious identity, while Pashtunwali highlights the importance of a certain value system (centered on hospitality, bravery, honor and chivalry).<sup>76</sup> In this case, while Taliban leaders appropriated Islamic principles, their resistance was rooted more in the Pashtunwali creed. However, it was not just an adherence to the Pashtunwali code that the Taliban used as a justification. The Taliban leadership had claimed in 1998 that if it went against this code and expelled bin Laden, the regime would be overthrown.<sup>77</sup> Thus the goal of regime survival was intertwined with the need to adhere to traditional tribal laws as well as religious principles.

While the Taliban leaders based their decision on Pashtunwali, it was not as if the U.S. was unaware of this preference ordering. As stated above, in the late nineties, when Washington tried to apprehend bin Laden, the Taliban had made the same argument. According to recently released State Department documents detailing contacts with the Taliban, in 1998, the U.S. government communicated to the Taliban that bin Laden had in fact abused the Pashtunwali code because of his behavior unworthy of a guest.<sup>78</sup> One U.S. diplomat who spoke to Mullah Omar in 1998 told him that, "bin Laden was like a guest

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<sup>74</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban*, pg. 112.

<sup>75</sup> Palwasha Kakar, 'Tribal Law of Pashtunwali and Women's Legislative Authority,' <http://www.law.harvard.edu/programs/ilsp/research/kakar.pdf>

<sup>76</sup> Peter Marsden, *The Taliban*, (New York, NY: Zed Books, 2002), pp. 85-86.

<sup>77</sup> Declassified State Department document, October 1998, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB134/Doc%208.pdf>

<sup>78</sup> Declassified State Department document, August 1998, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB134/Doc%203.pdf>

who was shooting at neighbors out of the host's window.”<sup>79</sup> Thus the U.S. had earlier tried to frame the issue differently. After 9/11, the priority allotted to Pashtunwali by the Taliban was disregarded by Washington. Even if it was considered by U.S. policymakers, this was not reflected in U.S. coercive diplomacy.

According to one account, U.S. action both before and after 9/11 was based on the perception that since Al Qaeda was a non-state actor the Taliban (a state actor) would accord more importance to cooperation with the U.S. (another state actor) than to support bin Laden.<sup>80</sup> If this view is accepted then it shows that U.S. policy was still largely rooted in Cold War era structures and had not taken seriously the changes in the international political system.

However, while the importance of Pashtunwali for the Taliban cannot be understated, it is important to consider that during this crisis there were dissenting opinions from lesser known Pashtun leaders which suggested that this code was not as rigid as commonly assumed. Abdul Rahim Kham Mandokhel, a Pakistani Pashtun leader and former senator, stated during the crisis that according to the same Pashtun customs, the Taliban was obliged to give up bin Laden because actions of the guest are the responsibility of the host.<sup>81</sup> According to this interpretation, the Taliban had two options – to either absolve bin Laden or hand him over to the U.S. for prosecution. Another Pashtun leader and politician based in Pakistan, Lateef Afridi, also stated that melmastia and its obligations on the host have its limits. According to Afridi, “As far as a foreigner is concerned, if he takes refuge in my house and has enemies, then it (melmastia) doesn't apply.”<sup>82</sup> This suggests that while the image that the U.S. had of the Taliban was not accurate, at the same time, the rigid Pashtunwali code was open to interpretation, at least in some quarters. Before 9/11, on at least one occasion, U.S. diplomats had tried to frame Pashtunwali in their own favor by stating that bin Laden had in fact violated the code. However, post 9/11 this line of reasoning was not explored further.

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<sup>79</sup> Declassified State Department document, August 1998, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB134/Doc%202.pdf>

<sup>80</sup> Norman Friedman, *Terrorism, Afghanistan and America's New Way of War*, (Annapolis, MD, Naval Institute Press, 2003), pg. 21.

<sup>81</sup> ‘Afghan traditions ensure handing over of bin Laden to US,’ *The Pakistan Newswire*, October 4, 2001.

<sup>82</sup> Eliza Griswold, ‘In the Hiding Zone,’ *The New Yorker*, July 26, 2004.



The Taliban leadership's reliance on Pashtunwali and Islamic solidarity to protect bin Laden further eroded the asymmetry of motivation between the two sides. This attitude of adherence to traditional customs had a high priority (despite the dissenting opinions stated above) and was part of the Taliban's fundamental interests. Therefore, since U.S. demands were seen as breaching the Taliban's interests, coercion became more difficult. It must be noted here that U.S. motivation was not insignificant either – capturing bin Laden and neutralizing terror camps was a pressing national need.

## Implications:

### **How did perceptions impact on coercive diplomacy?**

This section shows that while the U.S. was aware of the impact of cultural and religious factors in the Taliban's decision-making, Washington did not give adequate importance to this factor. It is therefore likely that the assumption was that the massive international outcry would be enough to reduce the cultural/religious arguments in the Taliban's policymaking that led to resistance. Indeed, Mullah Omar himself condemned the attacks immediately after 9/11.<sup>83</sup>

While there were other motivations, especially for Mullah Omar (see next section on internal factors), the point here is that the Taliban was able to adopt cultural and religious doctrines as a credible basis for resistance. The issue here is not that it may or may not have been the complete reason for the Taliban's resistance; the issue is that in fact, the U.S. did not frame its arguments and demands that took into account the Taliban's cultural mores. Thus, the deficiency of Washington's coercive policy was not just in terms of understanding the target's psychological decision-making, but also in a failure to communicate and signal in a manner that was compatible with Omar's cultural and psychological mindset (since he was the primary decision-maker of the Taliban).

It is therefore no surprise that after the Taliban's fall, one of its senior leaders, Ramatullah Hashimi, stated that, "He (Omar) was a simple man who did not really

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<sup>83</sup> Barry Bearak, 'Condemning Attacks, Taliban Says Bin Laden Not Involved,' *The New York Times*, September 12, 2001.

understand international relations.”<sup>84</sup> Thus, while the U.S. articulated its demands on a security/strategic plane, Omar’s responses were based mainly on religious dimensions (such as his suggestion of Islamic courts to try Bin Laden) or cultural motivations (the adoption of Pashtunwali to justify protecting Bin Laden).

This analysis shows that Washington’s coercive demands had the effect of increasing the Taliban’s motivation to resist, because the U.S. did not give adequate importance to the Taliban’s cultural priorities. Thus, while the U.S. motivation in this crisis was high, this was also increasingly the case with the Taliban. The initial condemnation of the attack and offers of an Islamic trial for Bin Laden soon gave way to a belligerent attitude by Mullah Omar based on an increasing resolve to resist U.S. forces. While other factors bound Omar to the Bin Laden cause, in the absence of any credible reassurance by the U.S. that his regime was not in danger, it was simpler for the Taliban to retreat into a cultural and religious decision-making shell.

**Table 7: Taliban case – Perceptions**

<b>Perceptions</b>	<b>Coercive diplomacy result</b>
- Increasing U.S. coercive demands after 9/11 did not adequately consider Taliban’s cultural/tribal priorities	Taliban was able to co-opt Pashtunwali code to protect bin Laden

## **INTERNAL FACTORS**

Pashtunwali was invoked by the senior Taliban leadership to justify the protection granted to bin Laden. However, this alone does not explain the Taliban’s resistance and how this strong connection between bin Laden and the Taliban (especially Mullah Omar) developed. Other internal factors including financial and operational connections as well as Omar’s personal relationship with bin Laden strengthened the reliance on Pashtunwali.

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<sup>84</sup> Nick Rufford, ‘Mullah refused to hand over bin Laden,’ *The Australian*, December 10, 2001.

## Taliban's drug profits and financial dependence on Al Qaeda

A further hypothesis is that if the Taliban was somehow gaining financially or through some other vital sector from Al Qaeda, it would have been reluctant to hand over bin Laden to the U.S. Therefore, the crucial questions to be asked in this section are: What was the financial relationship between the Taliban and the Bin Laden – Al Qaeda network? Did Bin Laden have access to sufficient finances to transfer portions of them to the Taliban? To what extent were bin Laden and Al Qaeda involved in the drug trade from Afghanistan? Would the Taliban's drug business have been affected if bin Laden was surrendered to the U.S.?

U.S. officials had claimed after 9/11 that the link between the Taliban and Al Qaeda developed because of the Taliban's involvement in the drug trade in Afghanistan.<sup>85</sup> While there is ample evidence of ties between various drug trafficking networks and terror organizations, it is unclear how bin Laden and the Al Qaeda network assisted the Taliban in furthering its drug revenue. In fact, the 9/11 Commission Report stated that though the Taliban received drug profits, there was no clear evidence that bin Laden was also part of the drug trafficking network or received any money from them.<sup>86</sup> However, it is possible that through his intricate financial networks, bin Laden might have facilitated the Taliban's drug activities, and according to some reports, bin Laden encouraged the Taliban to use the drug trade in its campaign against the West.<sup>87</sup> Further, according to a September 2001 British report, up to 3,000 tons of opium was stockpiled in Afghanistan, and a major proportion of this was held by bin Laden and his fighters.<sup>88</sup> Therefore, there were some indications of bin Laden's involvement in the drug trade, but these were never fully confirmed. On the other hand, the Taliban, while never directly involved in drug trafficking, profited by taxing the drug trafficking network.

In the war against terror, one of the chief aims of the U.S. government was to destroy terrorist financial and logistical networks. The Taliban was using drug profits (to

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<sup>85</sup> Testimony by Asa Hutchinson, Administrator, Drug Enforcement Administration, House Committee on Government Reform, Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources, Oct. 3, 2001.

<sup>86</sup> *The 9/11 Commission Report*, (New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 2004), pg. 171.

<sup>87</sup> Raphael F. Perl, 'Taliban and the Drug Trade,' Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, October 5, 2001.

<sup>88</sup> Jonathan Oliver, 'West will hit Taliban opium trade,' *The Mail on Sunday*, September 30, 2001.

varying degrees) to sustain itself and its activities. While the connection between Al Qaeda and Afghan drug trafficking is not very obvious, the Taliban was deeply involved in profiting from drug production. When the group first emerged in 1994, clamping down on drug production was high on its agenda. It started out by closing hashish outlets and destroying large stocks of opium. But it became obvious that poppy cultivation was all that large sections of the ravaged population had in order to earn their livelihood. Therefore, cultivation was allowed but not for personal consumption, and Taliban religious scholars imposed a taxation system under which 5-10 percent of the output went to the Taliban, which kept two-thirds of that while distributing the rest among the needy.<sup>89</sup> Taliban's opposition to the drug trade was restricted to preventing its own populace from drug consumption. In an interview, Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar said, 'One thing, at least, is clear: we will permit neither opium nor heroin to be sold in Afghanistan itself. It is not up to us to protect non-Muslims who wish to buy drugs and get intoxicated... Our goal for ourselves is to gradually eliminate all drug production in the country so as to safeguard our youth.'<sup>90</sup> Omar also admitted in another interview that the Taliban received taxes from the opium trade.<sup>91</sup>

Other eyewitness accounts went further than this. They claimed that the Taliban aggressively encouraged the production of opium and in fact distributed fertilizers for this purpose.<sup>92</sup> By 2001, the Taliban controlled 90% of Afghanistan and officially its leadership claimed to have acted stringently to eradicate the opium poppy and cannabis production. While the Taliban did ban the cultivation of poppy in 2000, it continued to tax the product. Through its monopoly position and the control of the level of production, it was able to facilitate a dramatic increase in prices, which resulted in higher profits.<sup>93</sup>

The argument being made here is that if bin Laden was given up, the drug trade would also have been under threat as it was a crucial fund raising tool for terror groups. And since Washington sought to degrade terrorist financial networks, ending drug

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<sup>89</sup> Alain Labrousse, 'The FARC and the Taliban's Connection to Drugs,' *Journal of Drug Issues*, Winter 2005, pg. 173.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, pg. 174.

<sup>91</sup> William Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars*, (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pg. 236.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Raphael F. Perl, 'Taliban and the Drug Trade.'

trafficking from Afghanistan would be a crucial step towards a long term solution. Therefore, this was a major threat to the Taliban's income. As it happens, the group was already under major international sanctions by 2001.<sup>94</sup> Thus, the decision to resist U.S. pressure was closely related to the Taliban's regime survival agenda, even if Washington did not necessarily focus on regime change in the early stages of the campaign in Afghanistan.

More obvious financial links between bin Laden and the Taliban were through direct assistance by the former,<sup>95</sup> despite the fact that Bin Laden's personal fortune had been reduced drastically during the 1990s. This reduction in his personal fortune came when bin Laden was expelled from Sudan in May 1996, causing him a loss of \$300 million in investments in the country.<sup>96</sup> This followed his financial losses in Saudi Arabia in the early 1990s when the government there clamped down on his activities. After his departure from Sudan, bin Laden rebuilt his financial network and, according to the 9/11 Commission Report, by early 1998 he had become the 'rich man of the jihad movement.'<sup>97</sup>

Bin Laden also received millions from wealthy Arabs who donated money either because they believed in his version of Islamic jihad or to buy protection in the event that fundamentalist Islamic groups owing allegiance to Al Qaeda overthrow the Persian Gulf monarchies.<sup>98</sup> According to one report, Arab financial backers provided \$16 million annually to bin Laden.<sup>99</sup> An important network was the so-called 'Golden Chain,'<sup>100</sup> comprising prominent individuals in the Gulf, which was formed in the 1980s to aid anti-Soviet mujahideen in Afghanistan. The money was used to build the terrorist infrastructural network for the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. The 9/11 Commission Report concluded that bin Laden 'enjoyed a strong financial position in

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<sup>94</sup> In December 2000, the UN imposed sanctions on the Taliban (arms embargo, air travel embargo, freezing of external assets) for failing to hand over bin Laden. In July 1999, the U.S. had imposed economic sanctions on the Taliban.

<sup>95</sup> Douglas Frantz and David Rohde, 'A National Challenged – The Bond: How Bin Laden and Taliban Forged Jihad Ties,' *The New York Times*, November 22, 2001.

<sup>96</sup> Lawrence Wright, 'The man behind Bin Laden,' *The New Yorker*, September 16, 2002.

<sup>97</sup> *The 9/11 Commission Report*, pg. 67.

<sup>98</sup> Douglas Frantz & David Rohde, 'The Bond: How Bin Laden and Taliban Forged Jihad Ties.'

<sup>99</sup> 'CDI Primer: Terrorist Finances,' Center for Defense Information, October 25, 2002.

<sup>100</sup> 'Golden Chain' was a list of 20 suspected Al Qaeda financiers. The list was discovered in the office of a Saudi charity in Sarajevo, Bosnia, in March 2002.

Afghanistan' through various sources such as the Saudi financiers and that the Taliban benefited from this largesse, financially and in other ways.<sup>101</sup>

Financial networks supporting Al Qaeda also included several charities operating in the Middle East. One of the most prominent of these was the Al Haramain Islamic Foundation, which was designated by the Treasury Department in June 2004 as a non-governmental organization providing support to Al Qaeda.<sup>102</sup> In Pakistan, through Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Maulana Masood Azhar, bin Laden secured access to funds from the Al Rashid Trust, the second largest charity in Pakistan by 2002.<sup>103</sup> Further, according to some reports, after 1997, the ISI arranged for bin Laden's terror camps in places like Khost to train militants to fight in Kashmir.<sup>104</sup> This system brought in more funds to bin Laden's network, and considering he was operating in Taliban territory, it would be fair to assume that some portion of these profits might have gone to Mullah Omar.

One indication of bin Laden's relatively strong financial base was the increase in the annual budget of Ayman al-Zawahiri's Islamic Jihad organization in 1998 from \$300,000 to \$500,000 after IJ decided to formally target the U.S. (By now IJ was formally affiliated to Al Qaeda).<sup>105</sup> Even earlier, bin Laden had laid the foundation for his relationship with the Taliban in 1996 when he gave the group \$3 million as it prepared to capture Kabul.<sup>106</sup> Further, according to Russian intelligence sources, the unsuccessful attack on Bin Laden's camps in Afghanistan in August 1998 had left him with unexploded Tomahawk missiles, which he then sold to China for at least \$10 million.<sup>107</sup>

By 2001, Bin Laden already had more than one source of income to succeed his own personal fortune. News reports also stated that from early 2000 to mid-2001 bin Laden was spending up to \$800,000 per month on acquiring ammunition, small arms, and rocket launchers from Soviet-era stockpiles.<sup>108</sup> Even if this is an exaggeration, a smaller

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<sup>101</sup> *The 9/11 Commission Report*, pg. 66.

<sup>102</sup> Alfred B. Prados & Christopher M. Blanchard, 'Saudi Arabia: Terrorist Financing Issues,' Congressional Research Service report, December 8, 2004, pg. 17.

<sup>103</sup> J. Millard Burr & Robert O. Collins, *Alms for Jihad*, (New York: NY: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pg. 102.

<sup>104</sup> Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower*, (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), pg. 250.

<sup>105</sup> Lawrence Wright, 'The man behind Bin Laden.'

<sup>106</sup> Peter L. Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.*, (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2001), pg. 162.

<sup>107</sup> Lawrence Wright, 'The man behind Bin Laden.'

<sup>108</sup> Jason Burke, 'Bin Laden and son: The grooming of a dynasty,' *The Observer*, September 23, 2001.

expense account would still be quite substantial, suggesting a relatively deep Al Qaeda financial chest from which to support the Taliban. The argument that the Al Qaeda network funded the Taliban was corroborated by Taliban leader Mohammed Khaskar, former Taliban intelligence chief and deputy defense minister. He stated in November 2001 that bin Laden controlled specific Taliban leaders by giving them money. He said that, “Al Qaeda was very important for the Taliban because they had so much money. They gave a lot of money. And the Taliban trusted them.”<sup>109</sup>

While there is no clear trail of a Taliban-Al Qaeda drug trafficking nexus, it is reasonable to argue that with the U.S. war on terror networks, an important source of funding for the Taliban would have been disrupted. Further, Bin Laden’s financial assistance had helped shore up the isolated Taliban regime, which contributed to the close ties between them, adding to the impact of the Pashtunwali code.

From the coercive diplomacy perspective, this shows the vulnerability of weak fragmented states, and the increased difficulty in successfully coercing such entities as the Taliban. One option would have been to break the financial relationship. This again highlights the importance of credible positive assurances or carrots, such as the promise of lifting economic sanctions. Nevertheless, given that there were other crucial links between the Taliban and bin Laden, it is unclear if economic rewards would have led to the Taliban changing its stance.

Furthermore, as we have seen there were significant differences within the Taliban itself regarding the treatment of bin Laden. This suggests that in weak states with competing power centers as well as external non-state benefactors (such as bin Laden), it becomes difficult for the coercer to decide on which group to apply coercion against. In such a scenario, the chances of spoilers emerging are also high.

## Operational links between Taliban and Al Qaeda

A further explanation for the Taliban’s support to bin Laden lies in the principle of reciprocity. In the period before 9/11, bin Laden provided the Taliban with various levels

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<sup>109</sup> Griff Witte, ‘Taliban defector is assassinated,’ *The Washington Post*, January 15, 2006. Khaskar had defected to Northern Alliance after 9/11, and was assassinated in Kabul in January 2006.

of military and operational support, apart from financial assistance. In fact unconfirmed reports also stated that for a period, bin Laden was defense minister under the Taliban regime.<sup>110</sup>

This strong relationship between the Taliban and bin Laden was reinforced just a few days prior to 9/11. On September 9, 2001, two Tunisian Al Qaeda members, posing as journalists carried out a suicide bombing in Khwaja Bahauddin in Afghanistan which killed Northern Alliance chief Ahmed Shah Masood.<sup>111</sup> According to U.S. officials, Masood had been key to neutralizing bin Laden after the Taliban leadership had firmly allied itself with Al Qaeda.<sup>112</sup> Considering that Masood was the Taliban's arch-enemy, this was a big favor from bin Laden and foreshadowed the events two days later. Recent revelations by a former Taliban foreign ministry official stated that the assassination of Masood was part of a plan by Al Qaeda to destroy the Northern Alliance and take the pressure off the Taliban.<sup>113</sup> In fact, one U.S. FBI official was quoted as saying after the attack on Masood, "Bin Laden is appeasing the Taliban. Now the big one is coming."<sup>114</sup> After 9/11, as the U.S. demanded bin Laden's surrender, the Al Qaeda chief reiterated that Omar was his leader. In a statement on September 16, he said, "I am residing in Afghanistan. I have taken an oath of allegiance to Omar, which does not allow me to do such things from Afghanistan."<sup>115</sup>

The Taliban also needed Al Qaeda's assistance in maintaining security in areas under their control. There were indications of unreliability of some Taliban soldiers and officials as U.S. coercion began. When the bombings commenced, night-time security in Kabul and other prominent cities was taken over by foreign militants, generally Arabs, because local Taliban fighters were not considered good enough.<sup>116</sup> As stated earlier, bin Laden's network was on an arms buying spree in the year prior to 9/11. Reports indicated that the weaponry equipped the 055 brigade, a unit consisting of 500-2000 Arabs based at

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<sup>110</sup> Norman Friedman, *Terrorism, Afghanistan and America's New Way of War*, pg. 83.

<sup>111</sup> Paul Cruickshank, 'Suicide bomber's widow soldiers on,' CNN.com, August 15, 2006, <http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/asiapcf/08/15/elaroud/index.html>

<sup>112</sup> Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower*, pg. 337.

<sup>113</sup> Matthew Pennington, 'Ex-Taliban chief details Massood killing,' *The Washington Post*, September 10, 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/09/09/AR2006090900503.html>

<sup>114</sup> Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower*, pg. 355.

<sup>115</sup> Molly Moore, 'Pakistan to seek bin Laden's surrender,' *The Washington Post*, September 17, 2001.

<sup>116</sup> 'The rout of the Taliban. Part two,' *The Observer*, November 18, 2001.



Rishkor outside Kabul, and which was deployed with the Taliban on the Kabul frontlines.<sup>117</sup> This brigade had two functions. The first was its role as an integral part of the Taliban army, acting as its shock troops, while the second was as Al Qaeda's guerrilla organization.<sup>118</sup>

This highly motivated and experienced group, composed mainly of non-Afghans was thus a very useful component of the Taliban's forces, and had fought the Northern Alliance from 1997 to 2001. According to one U.S. defense official, "it is that part of Al Qaeda that appears to be exclusively dedicated to the support of the Taliban," and is better motivated than Taliban soldiers.<sup>119</sup> Documents recovered after Enduring Freedom also show that the 055 brigade was an important operational link between the Taliban and Al Qaeda. Mullah Omar had appointed Jon Juma Namangani (leader of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan – IMU) as head of this brigade before he was killed in an air attack on Kunduz in November 2001.<sup>120</sup>

Although the strategic links between Taliban and Al Qaeda became increasingly obvious after the U.S. intervention, they were not restricted to bin Laden's assistance in militarily defending the Taliban. Evidence recovered from the regime's facilities in Kabul after the Taliban's defeat in November 2001, showed that the Taliban was at the very least, aware of Al Qaeda's terrorist plans. These materials, found in a house belonging to the Taliban Ministry of Defense, included a flight-stimulator computer program, a list of flying schools, and chemical, biological, and nuclear warfare-related documents.<sup>121</sup> This was yet another component of the multi-pronged connection between the Taliban and Al Qaeda, and demonstrated the symbiotic nature of the two groups.

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<sup>117</sup> Jason Burke, 'Bin Laden and son: The grooming of a dynasty.'

<sup>118</sup> Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*, (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. 58-59.

<sup>119</sup> 'The elite force who are ready to die,' *The Guardian*, October 27, 2001.

<sup>120</sup> Michael Isikoff & Mark Hosenball, 'The Saudi-Al Qaeda Connection,' *Newsweek* (web), Sept. 10, 2003.

<sup>121</sup> 'Al-Qaeda's trail of terror,' *The Guardian*, November 18, 2001.

## Religious and Personal Connection between Bin Laden and Mullah Omar

Apart from financial and operational links between bin Laden and the Taliban, personal and religious ties between them were also important factors that shored up the Taliban's resistance to U.S. demands. This was particularly so when disagreements within the Taliban on how to treat bin Laden, emerged after 9/11.<sup>122</sup> These differences were a reflection of broader differences between the Taliban and Al Qaeda. According to a then classified DIA document, "eventually the Taliban and Al Qaeda will war with each other. The weakness of both is in the minds of the individuals that belong to the groups and in the power that is given to them by their names. Al Qaeda have not integrated with Afghans or the Taliban, leaving them susceptible to exploitation."<sup>123</sup> Nevertheless, Omar quickly dismissed any perceived weaknesses in the public comments by Taliban officials and its envoys in Islamabad.<sup>124</sup> However, Omar was able to throw the institutional backing of the Taliban behind bin Laden. To a large degree Omar was able to control his group's attitude toward bin Laden because the Taliban's practice of Islam rested on unrelenting loyalty and submission to the authority of a charismatic leader.<sup>125</sup>

The relationship began after Bin Laden arrived in Afghanistan from Sudan in May 1996 and it soon became clear that there were differences between bin Laden and Mullah Omar. In fact, for a time in the late nineties, the Taliban leadership, including Omar, was greatly concerned about bin Laden's frequent provocative media interviews. On several occasions Omar ordered bin Laden to desist from these public pronouncements, and in fact got him to move his base from Jalalabad to Kandahar so that his activities could be regulated. Matters became more serious after the embassy bombings and the subsequent retaliatory missile attacks by the U.S., as bin Laden's campaign threatened to split the Taliban and this infuriated Omar.<sup>126</sup> The turning point came shortly afterwards when bin Laden swore loyalty to Omar and accepted him as Amir-ul-Momineen (Commander of the

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<sup>122</sup> 'The noose tightens,' *The Observer*, October 7, 2001.

<sup>123</sup> B. Raman, 'Pakistan through the US looking glass.'

<sup>124</sup> 'The noose tightens.'

<sup>125</sup> Shah M. Tarzi, 'Coercive Diplomacy and an 'Irrational' Regime: Understanding the American Confrontation with the Taliban,' pg. 38.

<sup>126</sup> Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower*, pg. 287.

Faithful).<sup>127</sup> After this, Omar's relationship with bin Laden was firmly established. In the nineties, as the U.S. sought to apprehend bin Laden, he sought Omar's protection. In a letter found after the overthrow of the Taliban (letter's date unspecified), bin Laden requested Omar not to surrender him to the U.S., and Omar wrote back agreeing to the request.<sup>128</sup>

While the Taliban leadership espoused the Pashtunwali doctrine to justify protecting bin Laden, the push for this stance came from Mullah Omar. A significant proportion of Taliban officials dissented from this policy on bin Laden, as far back as 1998. In a recently declassified State Department document from September 1998, Abdul Hakim Mujahid, who was Taliban ambassador to Pakistan till 1998 before transferring to the Taliban's UN mission, told U.S. officials that Omar was the main supporter of sheltering bin Laden and that 80 percent of Taliban officials including deputy Taliban leader, Mullah Rabbani, were against this policy.<sup>129</sup> Thus the collective backing of the Taliban for bin Laden stemmed from Mullah Omar's insistence on this position. The close personal relationship between bin Laden and Mullah Omar therefore helps explain why the Al Qaeda leader was not surrendered by the Taliban after the 1998 embassy bombings. Further, hardliners around Omar such as Justice Minister Nooruddin Turabi and intelligence chief Qari Hamidullah, encouraged Omar in his intractable approach.<sup>130</sup> And by 2001, hardliners largely controlled the Taliban.<sup>131</sup>

Evidence of increasingly radical positions came in the form of three controversial actions by the Taliban. In early 2001, the ancient Bamiyan Buddha statues (dating 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century) in Afghanistan were destroyed by the Taliban. Then, Hindus in the country were ordered to wear identifying labels, and finally in August 2001, several western aid workers were arrested on charges of proselytizing. Therefore, by September 2001, the Taliban was becoming even more radical in its agenda and combined with bin Laden's influence over Omar, this made its (Taliban's) resistance even stronger.

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid, pg. 288.

<sup>128</sup> 'Al-Qaeda's trail of terror,' *The Guardian*, November 18, 2001.

<sup>129</sup> Declassified State Department document, September 1998, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB134/Doc%206.pdf>

<sup>130</sup> Rory McCarthy, 'Taliban rebut talk of peace plan and vow to fight on,' *The Guardian*, October 20, 2001, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/waronterror/story/0,,577559,00.html>

<sup>131</sup> Peter L. Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.*, pg. 165.

Former Saudi intelligence chief, Prince Turki bin Faisal, also backed the opinion that Mullah Omar had become increasingly influenced by bin Laden's radical ideas by 2001. In June 2001, Mullah Omar reportedly agreed to hand over bin Laden to Saudi Arabia. However, in September 2001, when Prince Turki went to Afghanistan to persuade Omar to give up bin Laden, he was rebuffed. Furthermore, Omar also reverted to bin Laden's virulent criticism of the Saudi kingdom by condemning the presence of American troops in Saudi Arabia, and calling for a jihad there.<sup>132</sup> Considering that Saudi Arabia was one of only three countries to recognize the Taliban (the others being Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates), and that Saudi Arabia also followed a variant of the strict Sunni Islam that Omar adhered to, this development was a major indicator of bin Laden's influence.

Bin Laden's influence on the Taliban also stemmed from his wider international exposure to radical Islamic groups and movements. According to one author, as the Taliban regime became more isolated internationally, bin Laden's influence on the group increased and he was able to introduce the ultra-conservative Wahabi doctrine of his homeland Saudi Arabia to the Taliban.<sup>133</sup> One indication of this was the increase in public executions under the Taliban from 1997 onwards, in line with Saudi tradition.<sup>134</sup> A major turning point in the Taliban's march across Afghanistan was its defeat in 1997 in the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif at the hands of Shiite Mujahideen troops. The accompanying massacre of hundreds of Taliban soldiers outraged its leadership, and when the United Nations' reaction was not deemed satisfactory, it pushed the regime into an enhanced attitude of paranoia, deepening the resentment toward the West, which was then exploited by bin Laden.<sup>135</sup>

One line of opinion has also stated that bin Laden desired this kind of counter-attack by the U.S. after 9/11 because this might then provoke the global Islamic community into waging war against the U.S.<sup>136</sup> In a signed letter to Mullah Omar, dated Sept. 13, 2001, bin Laden stated that whatever the U.S. response to 9/11, it would lead to

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<sup>132</sup> Frantz & Rohde, 'A National Challenged – The Bond: How Bin Laden and Taliban Forged Jihad Ties.'

<sup>133</sup> Kathy Gannon, *I is for Infidel*, (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2005), pg. 73.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, pp. 73-74.

<sup>136</sup> Norman Friedman, *Terrorism, Afghanistan and America's New Way of War*, pg. 60.

its decline and destruction. If the U.S. did not retaliate, its reign as a superpower would be over, and if it did respond, its power would decline because it would be defeated in Afghanistan just like the Soviet Union in the eighties.<sup>137</sup> With these calculations in mind, bin Laden was thus able to manipulate Mullah Omar's backing (and by extension, the Taliban's backing) for his broader goals.

## Honor Code Vs Political/Financial Connections

The discussion on perceptions and internal factors might suggest a basic incompatibility between the Taliban's adherence to the honor code and more worldly connections between bin Laden and the Taliban. One way to explain this seeming contradiction is that the financial, political, and personal relationship between bin Laden and Mullah Omar reinforced the need to adopt the tribal honor code to protect bin Laden. This does suggest that there might be some element of choice in whether to take recourse to a rigid tribal system, religious belief system.

As stated in the second half of the perceptions section, there were some dissenting voices among Pashtun leaders who felt that this code was misrepresented. From the perspective of coercive diplomacy, if recourse to a cultural belief is a matter of choice that is left to a leader of a collective leadership, it means that there has to be a more thorough examination of the decision-making structure of the target.

## Implications:

**How did the various internal factors impact on coercive diplomacy? i.e., how did these factors bolster the Taliban's decision to resist U.S. demands?**

The numerous internal factors show that interactions between the Taliban leadership and Bin Laden over the years had been substantial enough. Thus, for Mullah Omar, the implicit reassurances provided by the connection to Bin Laden outweighed the threat of U.S. attack.

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<sup>137</sup> The letter was disclosed in September 2006, by Waheed Mozhadah, a former senior Taliban foreign ministry official, see Matthew Pennington, 'Ex-Taliban chief details Massood killing,' *The Washington Post*, September 10, 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/09/09/AR2006090900503.html>

These financial and military links between the Taliban and Bin Laden's network were proven and did not necessarily rest on some future benefits from the Al Qaeda leader to the Taliban. Therefore, these internal links were a contributing factor to Omar's decision to protect Bin Laden.

From the coercive perspective, these shared links raised the strength of motivation on the part of the senior Taliban leadership, which then raised their stakes or level of national interest (defined in religious and cultural terms) in the dispute. The Bin Laden issue therefore incorporated several dimensions of firm links which provided a foundation for the decision to side with the Al Qaeda leader. As stated earlier, the tribal code of hospitality was already a major issue for Mullah Omar. When combined with other internal reasons for supporting Bin Laden, it contributed to the Taliban's resistance to U.S. coercion. As the next section on international strategic environment shows, elements within Pakistan, acting as spoilers, further bolstered the Taliban's resistance.

**Table 8: Taliban case: Internal factors**

<b>Internal factors</b>	<b>Coercive diplomacy result</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Personal connections between bin Laden and Mullah Omar</li> <li>- Military links between Al Qaeda and Taliban</li> <li>- Financial support from Taliban to Al Qaeda</li> </ul>	<p>These links provided reassurances to Mullah Omar. Reinforced the adoption of Pashtunwali code to protect bin Laden.</p>

## INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

International support is a key variable favoring success in coercive diplomacy. For a regime that is already isolated internationally, withdrawal of support by a key ally would logically push it toward conceding to the coercer's demands, especially if the demands do not necessarily focus on regime change. In this case, Pakistan, an erstwhile ally, did not just withdraw support, it also offered (albeit under some duress) military logistical support to the U.S. For the U.S., international support enhanced the credibility of its threats, once troops, aircraft, and warships moved in to the area around Afghanistan. These regional powers, such as Russia and Uzbekistan, had their own domestic political reasons for

supporting U.S. action against the Taliban and Al Qaeda. However, while Washington co-opted regional powers into its coercive policy, powerful elements within Pakistan subverted the intensity of this pressure. This compromised the extent of international support for the U.S. and also sent conflicting signals to the Taliban leadership.

One of the first major steps taken by the U.S. government after 9/11 was to ensure that Pakistan gave military and diplomatic assistance in combating Al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan. Washington asked the Musharraf regime to provide all information it had on Al Qaeda and allow the U.S. military to use Pakistan's air space if air-strikes were to take place. Soon after, on September 19, 2001, Musharraf delivered a televised address in which he explained to the Pakistani people why his government had decided to side with the U.S. against the Taliban. Islamabad's official renunciation of its support to the Taliban was a major step in the campaign against the Taliban-Al Qaeda combine. Pakistan's political-religious and military establishment had been the Taliban's staunchest ally since its evolution in the early 1990s in the madrasas of western Pakistan. Islamabad supported the Taliban in its fight against the Masood-led Northern Alliance, which, incidentally, was actively backed by India.<sup>138</sup> Pakistan was also one of only three countries to diplomatically recognize the Taliban (the others were Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates). Therefore, for the Taliban's key sponsor to back out in this manner at the time of greatest need would appear to have been a major setback.

International backing for U.S. action in Afghanistan also came from other regional actors, who had long-standing differences with the Taliban. Russia, which had experienced Islamist and separatist violence in Chechnya since the early nineties, did not pose any hurdles to U.S. plans for using former Soviet republics such as Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan as military logistical bases. Ruling regimes in these states had serious differences with Islamic opposition movements, and all of them, barring Turkmenistan, had supported regime change in Afghanistan since at least 1999.<sup>139</sup> Further, Iran which had serious differences with the Taliban, based on the Shia-Sunni sectarian divide, also assisted the U.S. in the aftermath of 9/11. Russia and Iran also shipped significant quantities of

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<sup>138</sup> In fact, Masood is reported to have succumbed to his injuries in an Indian Army-run hospital in Tajikistan.

<sup>139</sup> Martha Brill Olcott, 'Central Asia,' in Richard J. Ellings & Aaron L. Friedberg (ed.) *Asian Aftershocks*, (Seattle, WA: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2002), pp. 223-261.

weapons to the opposition Northern Alliance. By the first week of October, even though the U.S. still had not declared the ouster of the Taliban as a major objective, the Northern Alliance prepared to take the lead in fighting the ground war. The Northern Alliance foreign minister Dr. Abdullah stated just before the attacks that the Alliance had a force of 10,000 men to fight the Taliban.<sup>140</sup> It is also crucial to note that initial calls by the U.S. State Department for obtaining evidence of bin Laden's connection to 9/11<sup>141</sup> did not pose any significant problems to gathering regional support.

But while there was a diplomatic boycott of the Taliban after 9/11, this isolation did not extend to significant groups and political parties within Pakistan that supported the Taliban. Powerful politico-religious groups such as the Jamaat-e-Islami and the Afghan and Pakistan Defense Council defended the Taliban and stated that they would fight back if the U.S. attacked.<sup>142</sup> Meanwhile, tribal groups in Pakistan's Baluchistan and North West Frontier Province (bordering Afghanistan) mobilized to act in support of the Taliban, and according to some reports as many as 10,000 volunteers crossed over from Pakistan to fight for the Taliban.<sup>143</sup>

This hard-line attitude was also reflected among senior members of Gen. Musharraf's military regime. When Musharraf took power in October 1999, one of his objectives was to lessen the role of fundamentalist extremist groups in the country's political system, which was increasingly leading to sectarian violence. However, his military regime contained several senior military officers who had been radicalized over the years through General Zia-ul-Haq's Islamist agenda in the 1980s. After 9/11, as Washington tried to get Islamabad to put pressure on its Taliban allies, several of these officers disagreed with Musharraf's tilt towards the U.S.<sup>144</sup> Some of these officers, such as Lt. General Mohammed Aziz, Corps Commander Lahore,<sup>145</sup> reportedly continued to provide information and logistical support to bin Laden and his coterie even as U.S.

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<sup>140</sup> 'Russia's arms to anti-Taliban forces in Afghanistan,' *The Pakistan Newswire*, October 3, 2001.

<sup>141</sup> 'The march to the brink of battle,' *The Observer*, September 23, 2001.

<sup>142</sup> Molly Moore & Pamela Constable, 'Taliban asks clerics to rule on surrender of bin Laden,' *The Washington Post*, September 18, 2001, pg. A01.

<sup>143</sup> *Pakistan's Drift into Extremism*, (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2005), pg. 223.

<sup>144</sup> See Hassan Abbas, *Pakistan's Drift into Extremism*, pp. 219-220.

<sup>145</sup> He was later appointed Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, a largely ceremonial position.



coercion and the eventual air campaign began after 9/11.<sup>146</sup> Further, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, leader of Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam (JUI), which has always had close connections with the Taliban, stated that, “If Afghanistan is attacked, we will resist till the last drop of our blood... Government (Musharraf regime) agreement with the U.S. to extend the cooperation to it against Taliban is not acceptable to the nation.”<sup>147</sup> Thus, sympathetic elements across the Pakistani military and religious establishment worked to build up the Taliban’s resistance.

A more obvious indication of this came when Gen. Musharraf dispatched a delegation to the Taliban on September 16, 2001 to persuade it to comply with U.S. demands. The team included Mufti Nizamuddin Shamzai, head of a major Deobandi madrasa in Binori,<sup>148</sup> and Lt. Gen. Mahmood Ahmed, who was at that time head of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). However, instead of conveying this forceful message, Shamzai encouraged Mullah Omar to begin a jihad against the U.S. if Afghanistan was attacked.<sup>149</sup> Shamzai was a vital cog in the Taliban-Al Qaeda network, and also a patron-in-chief of the Al Rashid Trust, which was banned by the U.S. for financing Al Qaeda.<sup>150</sup> Furthermore, while Gen. Mahmood was not known to be a fundamentalist Islamist he was one of the officers who had strongly supported the rise of the Taliban and who favored a Pashtun-dominated administration in Kabul if the Taliban was dislodged.<sup>151</sup>

Ahmed also reportedly sanctioned another visit to Kandahar by a delegation of retired ISI officers to advise the Taliban on defense against possible U.S. air attacks.<sup>152</sup> He also persuaded Gen. Musharraf to cancel a direct meeting with Mullah Omar, ostensibly for security considerations.<sup>153</sup> Such a meeting might have helped soften Omar’s position by emphasizing the serious nature of the threat, and would have conveyed differing advice

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<sup>146</sup> B. Raman, ‘Pakistan’s dubious al-Qaeda suspect,’ *Asia Times*, September 13, 2003, [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South\\_Asia/EI17Df07.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/EI17Df07.html)

<sup>147</sup> ‘An attempt to topple Taliban govt to be foiled: JUI,’ *The Pakistan Newswire*, September 30, 2001.

<sup>148</sup> Bin Laden first met Mullah Omar at this madrasa, see Abbas, *Pakistan’s Drift into Extremism*, pg. 221.

<sup>149</sup> Hassan Abbas, *Pakistan’s Drift into Extremism*, pg. 221.

<sup>150</sup> Muhammed Najeeb, ‘Taliban not averse to talks with USA,’ *The Tribune*, September 30, 2001, <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2001/20010930/world.htm#1> and Syed Saleem Shahzad, ‘Troubled Karachi held to ransom,’ *Asia Times*, June 3, 2004, [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South\\_Asia/FF03Df04.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/FF03Df04.html)

<sup>151</sup> Nadeem Malik and Syed Saleem Shahzad, ‘Pakistan’s night of the long knives,’ *Asia Times*, October 9, 2001, <http://www.atimes.com/ind-pak/CJ09Df03.html>

<sup>152</sup> Michael Griffin, *Reaping the Whirlwind: Afghanistan, Al Qaeda and the Holy War*, pg. 269.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

than the favorable, encouraging opinions offered by Pakistani religious and military delegations.

As stated in the objectives section, by the second week of October, Islamabad realized that the Mullah Omar regime had to be replaced and its choice was a regime dominated by moderate Pashtun Taliban leaders. The September 16 visit thus has to be seen in this context. In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, when the visit took place, the Musharraf regime had not necessarily reached this conclusion (about the replacement of Omar). Therefore, when Musharraf sent a religious leader and an ISI chief, both with impeccable pro-Taliban credentials, it detracted from Pakistan's pressure on the Taliban and possibly strengthened Mullah's resolve to resist. This could have been avoided if the delegation had pressured Omar to concede, but as stated above, that did not happen, with Shamzai advising Omar to do the opposite. In fact, after the visit, Shamzai implicitly endorsed Omar's resistance by saying that, "we (Pakistani religious leaders team) are convinced that whatever Mullah Omar says is right and in accordance with Islamic laws and traditions."<sup>154</sup>

Apart from political support provided by these elements the Taliban reportedly also received direct military assistance from some groups within Pakistan. In November 2001, several news reports stated that as Northern Alliance and American forces advanced to the Northern Afghanistan city of Kunduz, hundreds of Pakistani army officers and intelligence officials were airlifted back to Pakistan in flights approved by the U.S. government.<sup>155</sup> According to Indian intelligence officials, about four thousand Pakistanis were evacuated in this airlift, including two Pakistani army generals.<sup>156</sup> It is not certain when these personnel arrived in Afghanistan, but it is fair to assume that they were present there two months earlier, before the bombing campaign began on October 7<sup>th</sup>.

If they had entered after that period, the possibility of being detected by American forces would have been high. Therefore, if we assume that these personnel were present with the Taliban in the period immediately after September 11, it is entirely possible that they would have contributed to the Taliban being more resolute in its resistance. This is

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<sup>154</sup> Muhammed Najeeb, 'Taliban not averse to talks with USA,' *The Tribune*, September 30, 2001.

<sup>155</sup> Seymour M. Hersh, 'The Getaway,' *The New Yorker*, January 28, 2002. Hersh based this on interviews conducted with several senior American military officers and intelligence officials of both the U.S. and India.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

plausible for two reasons – first, the Pakistani personnel would have added to the manpower available to fight. Second, given the presence of Pakistanis there, Gen. Musharraf would have been less inclined to support the U.S. in carrying out its threat to attack. Consequently, the clearest possibility is of spoilers disrupting the coercive process. Through political and military support they were probably able to bolster the defense and morale of the Taliban.

## Implications:

### **How did the international strategic environment impact on the effect of U.S. coercion?**

Initially the international community, especially regional states such as Russia, Iran and Pakistan, was quite supportive of U.S. demands as well as its threats to the Taliban. However, non-state elements within Pakistan acted as ‘spoilers’ to the success of U.S. coercion. Even though these actors eventually were unable to successfully defend the Taliban against the U.S. military threat, they were able to help convince the Taliban leadership that U.S. coercion could be countered successfully. In this manner, they were able to manipulate the Taliban’s perceptions of its overall capability as well as its (Taliban’s) perceptions of the intentions of these ‘spoilers.’

These non-state elements, acting as spoilers, therefore provided reassurances to the Taliban, which the U.S. had not conveyed effectively. Once again the issue comes down to the differing consequences that each side concluded successful CD would lead to. The Taliban assumed that any military action by the U.S. or concessions by the Taliban would lead to overthrow of the regime. The U.S. did not unambiguously deny such an agenda, even though its primary goal was behavior change in the Taliban (Type B CD). In order to ameliorate the resulting insecurity, the Taliban was willing to accept whatever reassurances it could get, and the spoilers, in the form of Pakistani religious and military leaders, provided this through their encouragement and support.

It is important to note that in this episode the U.S. had to engage with spoilers at an earlier stage also. Soon after 9/11, when the U.S. began to pressurize the Taliban, the Musharraf regime was a reluctant ally, hesitant to damage ties with the Taliban and inflame hard-line domestic opinions within Pakistan. At this early stage, senior U.S.

officials, including Secretary of State Powell and Deputy Secretary of State Armitage weighed in on Gen. Musharraf demanding that Pakistan cooperate with the U.S. in battling terror networks based in Afghanistan.<sup>157</sup> This was a clear example of anticipating potential spoilers before the coercive process begins.

However, other spoilers were able to damage U.S. coercive diplomacy. This section demonstrates that even though the U.S. was able to gather regional support for its actions, in the case of Pakistan this did not work effectively. Political-religious groups and individual actors had their own agendas and acted as spoilers to undermine the Musharraf regime's official commitment.

**Table 9: Taliban case – International Strategic Environment**

<b>International Strategic Environment</b>	<b>Coercive diplomacy result</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Influential Pakistani religious and military leaders were sympathetic to the Taliban</li> <li>- Reports of some unofficial military assistance to Taliban</li> </ul>	<p>These entities acted as spoilers to U.S. coercion. Bolstered Taliban resolve to resist U.S.</p>

## CONCLUSION

The preceding analysis demonstrates that even though cultural and religious mores derived from tribal Pashtun culture provided the main justification for the Taliban's support for bin Laden and resistance to U.S. demands, other factors helped reinforce the Taliban's resistance. These included U.S. objectives, which were taken to amount to eventual regime change, and the military and personal influence that bin Laden had developed over the Taliban leadership, especially Mullah Omar. Furthermore, spoilers in the coercive process

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<sup>157</sup> See 'With us or against us,' BBCNews.com, August 25, 2002, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/2212647.stm> and 'Armitage denies threatening Pakistan after 9/11,' MSNBC.com, September 22, 2006, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/14943975/>

included elements within Pakistan. Thus, a combination of these factors enabled the Taliban to resist U.S. coercion.

The lack of reassurances by the U.S. government also played a major role in shaping the Taliban's decision-making. In the absence of such reassurances, the Taliban had to opt for entities it was familiar with – Bin Laden and sympathizers within Pakistan. On a basic level, therefore, it was the Taliban's search for regime security that lead it to defy Washington's demands. Thus, the Taliban's stakes in the matter were already extremely high and therefore, asymmetry of motivation helped lead to failure of coercion.

This case has broader implications for contemporary developments in the region. Since 9/11, the role of bin Laden and the Al Qaeda network has transformed into a loose umbrella group that provides ideological inspiration, contacts, and direction to cells around the world. Meanwhile, bin Laden and his second-in-command Zawahiri have managed to survive and have periodically sent video and audio messages through the media. By now it is generally assumed that they are hiding out in the tribal areas of northwestern Pakistan.<sup>158</sup> Even if the direct threat from this network has been reduced, the resurgent Taliban-related groups in the region (both Afghanistan and northwest Pakistan) are emerging as potent forces. Pashtuns living on the Pakistan side of the border have become increasingly radicalized in the last few years and extremists now dominate the Waziristan region.<sup>159</sup>

Further, hard-line Islamist parties linked to the Taliban have now taken control of the government in Baluchistan province (which also borders Afghanistan), by democratic means. This symbolizes the fragmented nature of politics, society and economy in the broader region including Afghanistan and its neighbors. Ethnic and religious politics in the region has to be considered along side the devastated economy which is once again increasingly dependent on the production and transfer of illicit drugs.<sup>160</sup> This means that conflicting parties have ample resources to carry on the fight, and it also makes them more resistant to ending these illegal economic activities. They develop a stake in perpetuation

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<sup>158</sup> Ahmed Rashid, 'He's Welcome in Pakistan,' *The Washington Post*, February 26, 2006, pg. B01.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> For an analysis on the political-economy of the decades-long conflict in Afghanistan see Paula R. Newberg, 'Surviving State Failure: Internal War and Regional Conflict in Afghanistan's Neighborhood,' in Cynthia J. Aronson & I. William Zartman (ed.), *Rethinking the Economics of War*, (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2005), pp. 206-233.

of the status quo. The international community has to consider these intricacies of the region before adopting any future policies, whether coercive or conciliatory.

In recent developments, in September 2006 the Musharraf regime signed a deal with pro-Taliban tribes in the Waziristan region bordering Afghanistan. As part of this deal, the Pakistani army, which is supposed to combat Taliban and Al Qaeda elements, will withdraw, and militants in the region will be allowed to remain as long as they do not engage in violence. Considering the porous nature of the border with Afghanistan it is not far-fetched to assume that Taliban and its related groups will now mount bolder attacks within Afghanistan in an attempt to overthrow the Karzai regime.

<b>Factors affecting coercive diplomacy</b>	<b>Consequence</b>
<b>Perceptions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Faulty perception of Taliban's preference ordering</li> <li>- Taliban's concern was for adhering to Pashtunwali, under which a guest had to be protected.</li> </ul>	<p>→ Therefore Taliban refused to give up Bin Laden.</p> <p>→ U.S. did not try to frame argument in this manner, i.e., that a guest should not bring harm to the host.</p>
<b>U.S. Objectives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Capture of Bin Laden and destruction of terrorist network in Afghanistan</li> <li>- Ambiguity regarding regime change Objective</li> <li>- No reassurances were given to Taliban</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assumption by Taliban that U.S. wanted to overthrow it.</li> <li>- Destruction of terror camps would have negatively impacted on Taliban's firepower.</li> <li>- Taliban refused to surrender bin Laden</li> </ul>
<b>Credibility of U.S. threats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High credibility of U.S. threats</li> <li>- Various UN resolutions supportive of U.S. actions</li> </ul>	<p>However, for the Taliban image of war was not daunting, especially since it believed the U.S. eventually wanted regime change</p> <p>Mullah Omar believed that the Soviet defeat would be replicated – contributed to Taliban's resistance.</p>
<b>Internal factors</b> <p>Taliban benefited financially from Al Qaeda and bin Laden</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Money given by bin Laden</li> <li>• Possible partnership in drug trade</li> </ul> <p>Operational links between Taliban and Al Qaeda</p>	<p>Strengthened relationship between Bin Laden and Mullah Omar, and gave the latter a disincentive to surrender bin Laden.</p>
<b>International Strategic Environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presence of spoilers in the coercive environment</li> <li>• Senior Pakistani religious and military leaders advised Mullah Omar to resist</li> </ul>	<p>Bolstered Taliban resolve to resist</p> <p>Lessened isolation of Taliban.</p>

**Table 10: Taliban case – Summary of arguments**





## **4.0 OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM – FAILURE OF U.S.**

### **COERCIVE DIPLOMACY?**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The invasion of Iraq in March 2003 and the subsequent occupation and insurgency became one of the defining actions of the George W. Bush administration. This chapter posits that the invasion of Iraq as well the resulting occupation was a failure of coercive diplomacy and asks why, in the face of the massive U.S. military build up and determination to go to war, Saddam Hussein did not concede. These coercive measures were part of ‘Type C’ coercive diplomacy, under which one state tries to force a change in the regime of the target state. Furthermore, in this particular case, an additional failure of CD stemmed from the resulting occupation of Iraq as well as the civil war-like situation in the country which has led to the loss of thousands of American lives and hundreds of thousands of Iraq lives. This was a failure of the coercive process and the decision-making structure to foresee such a situation.

Soon after George W. Bush took office in January 2001, the administration espoused a much more aggressive line on various security issues facing the U.S. The administration’s attitudes on foreign policy were marked by a preference for unilateralism in the event that multilateral support for its actions was not forthcoming. The fact that the U.S. was now the sole super power (albeit with important rivals, most notably China) in a unipolar world added to this confidence. After coming to power, the Bush administration had shown its unilateralist tendencies by opposing the Kyoto Protocol, as well as the fledgling International Criminal Court. An aggressive attitude toward the Saddam Hussein

regime was a continuation of a broader trend toward aggressively remaking the world order, especially after the events of 9/11.

As succeeding sections demonstrate, the Bush administration had decided to go to war long before the invasion in March 2003. Soon after 9/11, the administration sought to find connections between Al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein in order to justify military action against Iraq. It was clear to the international community that the Bush administration was aiming to take aggressive military action and was making the case for this by playing up Iraq's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and its alleged link to bin Laden. In such a scenario it would be reasonable to suggest that implicit coercion was in progress. In a situation where one side is determined to take military action against another state, there are naturally certain goals that it wants to achieve. Therefore, if the target can satisfy some of these objectives to avoid military action, it would imply that coercive diplomacy has succeeded. In any crisis (though generally not in cases of surprise attack), there is a period of time before military action by the coercer commences, and this is when coercive diplomacy can be successful if the target submits to the demands and fulfills the coercer's objectives. In this case, the time period was considerable, even if we consider 9/11 as the beginning of more aggressive U.S. intentions toward Saddam's Iraq.

The concept of coercive diplomacy includes objectives under which the coercer seeks changes in the regime of the target state, and is termed as Type C coercive diplomacy. Therefore, the question that this chapter seeks to answer is – why did Saddam Hussein resist this Type C regime change coercive diplomacy? The answer to this question lies in an examination of the period prior to the invasion in March 2003 through the concept of coercive diplomacy and focusing on the five major variables in this dissertation – objectives, perceptions, credibility of threats, international strategic environment and internal factors.

## Archetype

This case study is an example of the use of Type C coercive diplomacy with the primary objective of stopping acquisition of WMD by a 'rogue' state. Counter-proliferation is a key element of U.S. foreign policy, and the U.S. government has considered several options for dealing with this problem. One such option is to facilitate regime change in a country

suspected of pursuing WMD programs. Given that states such as Iran and North Korea have begun (as of 2006) plans for possible nuclear weapon acquisition, it is important to examine what role coercion plays on states considering such strategies.

## Chronology

The Iraq project concentrated the minds of several Bush administration luminaries after the first Gulf War. Many of these figures held prominent positions in the administration of President George H.W. Bush and during the nineties they voiced concern that Saddam Hussein represented a grave threat to the United States. This included an influential 1998 statement by the Project for the New American Century (signed by several future Bush II administration officials such as Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, and Richard Armitage) that advocated regime change in Baghdad. The first Gulf War had left Saddam Hussein still entrenched as ruler of Iraq. No-fly zones had been established to protect Shia and Kurdish populations, but that did not stop Saddam from brutally clamping down when the Shias rebelled after the war. The decision to leave him in power was regretted by prominent members of the first Bush administration, some of whom were now back in the second Bush White House. The unfinished nature of the objectives of the 1990 war was compounded by the fact that UN weapons inspectors after the war found that Baghdad's WMD program (including its pursuit of nuclear weapons) had been much more advanced than previously assumed.

In the years preceding 9/11, steps had been taken by the U.S. and its allies to apply increasing pressure on Saddam's Iraq. These moves were based on the framework of a series of UN resolutions. One of the most prominent of these was UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 687 which led to the formation of the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) charged with destruction, removal or rendering harmless, under international supervision" of Iraq's chemical and biological weapons program and those of its ballistic missiles with a range greater than 150 kilometers.<sup>1</sup> The bargain here was that if Baghdad cooperated in dismantling its WMD programs, economic sanctions against it would be

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<sup>1</sup> Liam Anderson & Gareth Stansfield, *The Future of Iraq*, (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pg. 90.

lifted.<sup>2</sup> But despite this seemingly straightforward bargain, Washington's intention was regime change. According to President George H.W. Bush, speaking in April 1991, UN sanctions were meant not just for disarmament in Iraq but for the ultimate objective of removing Saddam Hussein from power.<sup>3</sup> This was based on the opinion that while UN inspectors tried to ensure Saddam's weapons programs were rolled back, there was always the suspicion that Saddam still aimed to acquire nuclear weapons and this pursuit would be resumed as early as possible.

After 9/11, the clamor for action against Iraq grew among influential members of the policymaking establishment. This was touted as part of the campaign against terror, as well as an initial and necessary step towards bringing about paradigmatic change in the Middle East. The 'domino effect' which concentrated U.S. strategic minds during the Vietnam War, played a role in this instance also. Regime change in Iraq would lead to a democratic domino effect through which repressive, unfriendly regimes in the region would be replaced by democratic ones. Regime change through force or the threat of force thus became an integral part of post 9/11 U.S. foreign policy. This paper attempts to explain a major case study of U.S. foreign and military policy. Its importance stems from the fact that there are still several other states against which regime change is one of the objectives being considered.

## **OBJECTIVES**

This section deals with a key element of coercive diplomacy – the kind of objectives that the coercer has in putting forth its demands. One of the key elements of a coercive diplomacy strategy is that the higher the magnitude of the demand, the more difficult it is for the target state to concede. Conversely, a more reasonable demand, which provides more room to maneuver for the target has a higher chance of succeeding. This section makes two main points. First, that the U.S. pursued regime change as the main, non-negotiable demand, which broadened objectives, detracting from effective coercion.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, pg. 91.

Second, intelligence presented by the Bush administration was too distorted for a reliable case to be made for effective coercive diplomacy.

A guiding principle of coercive diplomacy is that one way for the coercer to turn the asymmetry of motivation in its favor is ensuring that the demands do not go against the basic fundamental interests of the target, and should be restricted to the interests of the coercer only. In this case however, regime change was the main agenda, which by its very nature goes against the interests of the target regime. Therefore, this ensures that the target has a fundamental stake in resisting the coercer's demands. Toning down the objectives can still increase the possibility of some settlement. Merely a few changes in the target regime (such as the removal of some personnel) can still leave the asymmetry of interests in favor of the coercer. But in this case a comprehensive regime change agenda left the Saddam Hussein regime with much more at stake in the confrontation. Thus the asymmetry of motivation tilted in favor of Baghdad.<sup>4</sup> Throughout the pre-Operation Iraqi Freedom phase, the Bush administration argued its case from a type B approach – i.e., roll back of Iraq's WMD programs, while simultaneously arguing that this variant of coercive diplomacy was not possible without the success of type C (forcing changes in the target's government).

When the Bush administration came into office in January 2001, its foreign policy posture was more aggressive than that of the outgoing administration, and this posture was reflected across several issues. Officials were reluctant to offer too many concessions to North Korea under the then ongoing Agreed Framework deal.<sup>5</sup> Senior members of the administration had been advocating tougher measures against 'rogue' regimes during the nineties. For example, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld had been involved in an influential report on the growing missile threat from such 'rogue' nations. Thus, even before the events of September 11, 2001, the Bush administration was gearing up to take action against hostile regimes, such as North Korea and Iraq.

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<sup>4</sup> An interesting contrast here would be to compare this case with that of coercive diplomacy in Laos, 1961-62.<sup>4</sup> In that episode, U.S. demands were never rigidly identified. The result was that U.S. policies were regularly modified in response to changing equations on the ground there.

<sup>5</sup> The Agreed Framework officially broke down only in October 2002, after North Korea surreptitious uranium enrichment program was revealed.

With 9/11, the quest for regime change in Baghdad received fresh impetus. The day after the attacks, at a National Security Council meeting, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld suggested that along with Afghanistan, Iraq should be a primary target; his deputy, Paul Wolfowitz strongly concurred.<sup>6</sup> Wolfowitz advocated military action against Iraq even though the blame pointed mainly toward the Osama bin Laden-led Al Qaeda and its support structure in Afghanistan in the form of the Taliban. Thus some influential members of the administration sought to frame the issue of regime change in Iraq as part of the broader anti-terrorism campaign. In October 2001, the campaign in Afghanistan began. As Taliban and Al Qaeda elements were being rounded up, slowly but steadily the clamor for action against Iraq gained ground in the administration. By November 2001, President Bush asked Secretary Rumsfeld to consider plans for war against Iraq.<sup>7</sup> In early 2005, British government memos, dating back to July 2002, revealed that the Bush administration had decided on regime change in Baghdad through military action as early as July 2002, if not earlier.<sup>8</sup>

In January 2002, in his State of the Union address, President Bush labeled Iraq as a member of the 'axis of evil.' He further stated that 'axis of evil' states like Iraq posed a threat to the world not just because of their pursuit of weapons of mass destruction but also because they would be inclined to transfer these weapons to terrorist groups.<sup>9</sup> Thus by linking Iraq to two of the most severe threats facing the U.S. (WMD proliferation and terrorism), the administration sought domestic and international support for its actions.

Clearly, the primary objective for a group of influential U.S. policymakers was regime change in Baghdad. However, the rationale for this objective (regime change) was extremely broad and included the threat of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of the Saddam regime. By the end of 2001, the goals for the Iraq campaign were regime change, eliminating any ties to WMD proliferation and terrorist networks and removing the danger

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<sup>6</sup> Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2002), pg. 49.

<sup>7</sup> Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2004), pg. 1, 30.

<sup>8</sup> See John Daniszewski, "Indignation Grows in U.S. Over British Prewar Documents," *Los Angeles Times*, May 12, 2005; Fred Kaplan, "Reading the Downing Street Tea Leaves," *Slate.com*, June 23, 2004, <http://slate.msn.com/id/2121222/>

<sup>9</sup> State of the Union address (text), January 29, 2002, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>

from Iraq to any of the neighbors, especially Israel.<sup>10</sup> By any standards this was a tall order. The rationale moved from WMD pursuit, to connections to Al Qaeda to democracy promotion. This betrayed a lack of clarity of objective, which is a key factor favoring successful coercive diplomacy. In contrast, Operation Desert Storm in 1991 had limited objectives and enabled international consensus for action to evict Iraqi forces from Kuwait.

Simultaneously some relatively moderate members of the administration such as Secretary Powell and Deputy Secretary Armitage at the State Department, endorsed a plan centered on persuading Saddam to admit further UN inspections.<sup>11</sup> President Bush also publicly stated in November 2002 that Saddam should allow weapons inspectors back in, saying that “he’ll find out” the consequences if he did not.<sup>12</sup> This has to be examined in context of attempts by the United Nations to send inspectors back into Iraq as a way of avoiding war. Between March and May 2002, United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan tried to persuade the Baghdad regime to allow in inspectors, but in vain.

One analysis has suggested that for the U.S., the minimum objective was not regime change but in fact removing the threat of WMD proliferation, and in this context, President Bush stated in a September 2002 speech at the UN that, “If the Iraqi regime wishes peace, it will immediately and unconditionally foreswear, disclose, remove, or destroy all weapons of mass destruction, long-range missiles and all related material.”<sup>13</sup> Then in December that year, weapons inspectors did go back to Iraq. The Iraqi dictator’s opinion was that by allowing weapons inspectors back and allowing them complete access, Washington would lose its rationale for invasion.<sup>14</sup> Thus for a short period, the signal was that an objective short of regime change might be considered; but soon the objective reverted to regime change as the only way to ensure that Iraq’s future WMD capabilities and intentions were destroyed. The inspectors remained there till March 2003, and certified

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<sup>10</sup> Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, pg. 42.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 39.

<sup>12</sup> Ron Huisken, ‘Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction: A Case of Intelligence Following Policy,’ *Global Change, Peace & Security*, Vol. 18, No. 1, February 2006, pg. 28.

<sup>13</sup> Coral Bell, ‘Iraq, alliances, and crisis management,’ *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 57, No. 2, July 2003, pg. 225.

<sup>14</sup> Kevin Woods, Michael R. Pease, Mark E. Stout, Williamson Murray, and James G. Lacey, *Iraqi Perspectives Project*, Joint Center for Operational Analysis (JCOA), Joint Forces Command, March 2006, pg. 29.

that Iraq was not running a nuclear weapons program.<sup>15</sup> In October 2003, this was subsequently endorsed by the Iraq Survey Group team led by David Kay. The Duelfer report also reached the same conclusion.

It is interesting to juxtapose the unilateral and multilateral tendencies of U.S. coercive diplomacy, whereby the administration tried to convince the international community, and specifically the UN Security Council, that its threat of unilateral action against Iraq was real, which would then spur the UN to act more strongly.<sup>16</sup> This led to UN Security Council resolution 1441 (Nov. 2002) which warned Iraq a final time to comply with its commitment to disarm. However, the serious difficulty here was that even if Iraq partially complied with the UN resolutions, this would not have been enough and the U.S. would then interpret it as a material breach and opt for military action. This is eventually what happened – Iraq did allow weapons inspector back in, but it was not adequate for the Bush administration. Regime change, by its very nature, raises the stakes for the target state because that is the most fundamental interest.

## Information manipulation and clarity of objectives

Prior to the war there were three main reasons given for military action against Iraq.<sup>17</sup> First was the accusation that the Saddam Hussein regime was linked to the 9/11 attacks. Evidence for this was a reported meeting between an Iraqi intelligence operative and 9/11 terrorist Mohammed Atta in Prague in April 2001. But this claim was refuted on several occasions, by agencies such as the FBI and CIA.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, this claim was repeated by administration figures, notably Vice President Cheney. There were also allegations of connections between Al Qaeda and the leader of the Al Tawhid terror group, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, even though Zarqawi's group had been operating from the Kurdish region in northern Iraq, which was not under the control of Baghdad.

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<sup>15</sup> Chaim Kaufmann, "Threat Inflation and the Failure of the Marketplace of Ideas," *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 1, Summer 2004, pg. 25.

<sup>16</sup> Robert O. Keohane, 'Multilateral Coercive Diplomacy: Not 'Myths of Empire'', November 2002, [http://www.ciaonet.org/special\\_section/iraq/papers/ker02/ker02.html](http://www.ciaonet.org/special_section/iraq/papers/ker02/ker02.html)

<sup>17</sup> After the invasion and the onset of the insurgency in Iraq, the rationale for the war has shifted to promotion of democracy in the region and defeat of Al Qaeda-linked militants in Iraq.

<sup>18</sup> 'U.S. drops last link of Iraq to 9/11 attacks,' *The New York Times*, May 2, 2002.



As recent official U.S. government reports have indicated it was difficult to prove that Saddam had links to terror groups, whether Al Qaeda or Zarqawi, simply because Saddam himself was opposed to these outfits. According to a declassified report by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Hussein in fact repeatedly turned down overtures from Al Qaeda and had in fact tried to apprehend Zarqawi, and according to former Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, the Iraqi dictator “only expressed negative sentiments about bin Laden.”<sup>19</sup>

But it is not as if the administration had been unaware of the Saddam’s lack of connections to terror groups. In January 2003, a CIA report concluded that, “Hussein viewed Islamic extremists operating inside Iraq as a threat.”<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, the very next day, Vice President Cheney stated that the Saddam regime “aids and protects terrorists, including members of Al Qaeda.”<sup>21</sup> The administration played down a crucial difference. Saddam, while an authoritarian dictator, was a secular Arab, as was the case with the Ba’ath Party right from its inception. He did adopt Islamic nationalism periodically to further his appeal; however, the basis for his rule was secularism. In contrast, Al Qaeda and its various adherents such as Zarqawi always adopted a radical, extreme and sectarian version of Islam, which condemned the officially secular regimes in the Arab world, such as Iraq and Egypt.

The second reason given was that Iraq was moving towards acquiring nuclear weapons capability and already possessed considerable stocks of chemical and biological weapons. In August 2002, Vice President Dick Cheney warned the American people that Saddam was “armed with an arsenal of these weapons of terror,” and that he could “directly threaten America's friends throughout the region and subject the United States or any other nation to nuclear blackmail.”<sup>22</sup> Administration officials stated that Baghdad’s nuclear weapons program had continued after the 1991 Gulf War. According to President Bush in September 2002, inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

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<sup>19</sup> Jonathan Weisman, ‘Iraq’s Alleged Al-Qaeda Ties Were Disputed Before War,’ *The Washington Post*, September 9, 2006.

<sup>20</sup> Jonathan Weisman, ‘Iraq’s Alleged Al-Qaeda Ties Were Disputed Before War.’

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> John B. Judis & Spencer Ackerman, ‘The Selling of the Iraq War: The First Casualty,’ *The New Republic*, June 30, 2003.

calculated that Iraq could develop a nuclear weapon within six months.<sup>23</sup> Such decade-old calculations were used by the administration to refute counter-arguments that Iraq was actually years away from developing nuclear weapons.<sup>24</sup> They also contended that IAEA inspectors had failed to completely dismantle Iraq's nuclear program after the first Gulf War. Therefore, Iraq would have had a standing nuclear program after 1991 through which to continue its weapons development.

Officials claimed that since Iraq already possessed a nuclear weapon design, if it acquired fissile material it would be in a position to manufacture a weapon.<sup>25</sup> For some time, the Bush administration also claimed that Iraq was trying to procure uranium from Niger, a claim that was refuted by the CIA<sup>26</sup> and other administration officials. Furthermore, the Senate Select committee report (mentioned above) also concluded that the anti-Saddam Iraqi National Congress (INC) which was favored by the Department of Defense had in fact given false information to the U.S. government about Iraq's WMD programs.<sup>27</sup>

Such distortion of the intelligence analysis process then influenced the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on Iraq's weapons program in October 2002. The report while, extremely detailed, and containing dissenting opinions on Iraq's WMD pursuit, only resulted in a one page summary being presented. This summary itself had contentious conclusions, especially dealing with Iraq's alleged hunt for aluminum tubes, findings that were disputed by the State and Energy Departments' intelligence branches.<sup>28</sup> Throughout 2002, while the U.S. and the United Kingdom repeatedly insisted on the availability of reliable intelligence on Iraq's WMD pursuit, it was never disclosed to the UN Security Council, and even then policymakers cautioned that no one should expect a smoking gun.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> 'Bush, Blair: Saddam has to go,' CBS News, September 7, 2002, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2002/09/08/attack/main521177.shtml>

<sup>24</sup> Chaim Kaufmann, 'Threat Inflation and the Failure of the Marketplace of Ideas,' pg. 20.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, pg. 21.

<sup>26</sup> Dana Priest & Karen DeYoung, "CIA Questioned Documents Linking Iraq, Uranium Ore," *Washington Post*, March 22, 2003.

<sup>27</sup> Jonathan Weisman, 'Iraq's Alleged Al-Qaeda Ties Were Disputed Before War.'

<sup>28</sup> Ron Suskind, *The One Percent Doctrine*, (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2006), pg. 175.

<sup>29</sup> Ron Huiskens, 'Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: A Case of Intelligence Following Policy,' *Global Change, Peace & Security*, Vol. 18, No. 1, February 2006, pg. 29.

Third, the administration stated that regime change in Iraq was required to promote democracy in the Middle East, because once Iraq was transformed into a democracy it would lead to a domino effect and introduce democracy to other authoritarian countries in the region. President Bush's opinion in framing this argument was that by fostering democracy and human rights in the Islamic world, their societies would be reformed thereby reducing the threat from terrorism.<sup>30</sup> However, from the standpoint of coercive objectives, several questions remained unanswered, such as – How would such an expansive democracy objective impact on U.S. allies such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt, that were less than democratic? What if the imposition of democracy led to radical Islamist parties with links to terror groups gained parliamentary power (such as the case of Hezbollah in Lebanon)? Such issues only added to the lack of clarity of objectives and broadened the magnitude of demands to unmanageable levels.

The purpose of this summary is not to point out the shortcomings of the Bush administration's arguments for the invasion of Iraq, but to show that a defective line of reasoning (by the administration) was used to bolster the case for regime change and impacted on components of coercive diplomacy. Key elements of coercive diplomacy did not operate in favor of the U.S., especially the clarity of objectives. This multiplicity of objectives which resulted in a high magnitude of demands reflected a lack of fundamental knowledge of Iraqi society and Iraqi attitudes. According to the Defense Science Board, a Pentagon advisory body, "it is clear that Americans who waged the war and who have attempted to mold the aftermath have had no clear idea of the framework that has molded the personalities and attitudes of Iraqis."<sup>31</sup>

Such an approach to intelligence analysis and information processing makes it more difficult to build a case to the international community and distorts the coercer's decision-making. Ideally, if there was unrelenting pressure from the international community, especially important states such as Russia and France, there would have been a better chance of successful coercion. However, with contentious and contradictory arguments put forth by various sections of the government and intelligence agencies, and no conclusive proof of Saddam's connections to terrorism or any recent pursuit of WMD,

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<sup>30</sup> Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, pp. 89-91.

<sup>31</sup> David Van Drehle, 'Wrestling With History,' *The Washington Post*, November 13, 2005.

it was difficult to convince the international community. As a later section mentions, the U.S. had effectively downgraded the importance of the international endorsement; however, this was not necessarily true of Saddam.

Furthermore, as the theory of coercive diplomacy specifies, one way of reducing the target's motivation to resist is by bringing down the magnitude of demands. The preceding analysis showed that the opposite happened. A second method is to offer carrots/concessions. However, this element was conspicuous by its absence. With an objective as extreme as regime change it is inherently difficult to offer any concessions, especially when the target is a regime like Iraq's in which the paramount objective is regime survival.

### Preventive war and justification of hostility

The Bush administration also argued the case for overthrowing Saddam Hussein from the conceptual standpoint of preventive war, in the belief that war with Iraq was inevitable.<sup>32</sup> The contention was that preventive war was necessary because deterrence and containment of Saddam was not possible in the future. The administration argued that if the U.S. did not act immediately and strike at future threats, the consequences might be disastrous for America, even if they were not immediate.<sup>33</sup>

However, while the characteristics of the case were in favor of the preventive war option (meaning that while there was no imminent threat, the adversary might develop the capacity to strike in future), it is actually a pre-emptive situation that favors more effective coercive diplomacy. In a pre-emptive scenario, the threat from the target is imminent and if the coercer does not strike, the target would definitely attack. Therefore, making the case for coercive diplomacy is easier in a pre-emptive scenario, and important components such as establishing a sense of urgency in the target can be fulfilled. It also then makes it easier to convince the international community, leading to isolation of the adversary.

But even with manipulation of intelligence, Washington could not effectively make the case that Saddam's Iraq was an imminent threat, and therefore the case had to be

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<sup>32</sup> James A. Russell & James J. Wirtz, 'Preventive War against Iraq,' Strategic Insights, Naval Postgraduate School, November 4, 2002.

<sup>33</sup> Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, pg. 132.

effectively argued from the preventive war perspective. But preventive war is fraught with obstacles that are relevant to the conduct of coercive diplomacy. First, information on future threats is never completely certain or unambiguous, and second, information on capabilities and intentions can be open to various interpretations.<sup>34</sup> This was a particular problem in the Iraq case with disputes in the government over Saddam's connections to terror groups and the regime's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction.

At this point it would be useful to discuss an alternate theoretical concept – Justification of Hostility Crises. According to Richard Ned Lebow, “Justification of hostility crises are unique in that leaders in the initiating nation make a decision for war *before* the crisis commences,” not to force a compromise but in fact, to provide a justification for the war before the crisis begins.<sup>35</sup> This concept helps frame the type of provocation into an advantageous contextual variable of successful coercive diplomacy. Briefly, the ‘type of provocation’ impacts on the ability of the coercer to define the culpability of the target state. Covert sponsorship of terrorism is more difficult to pinpoint, while an unambiguous violation of an established boundary is easier to prove, providing international legitimacy for the coercer.<sup>36</sup>

Recent reports show that this route was attempted by the Bush administration, even before it raised the issues of WMD proliferation and terrorism links to indict the Saddam Hussein regime. In 2002, in an operation codenamed Anabasis, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) planned to use exiled Iraqi soldiers to capture an air base inside Iraq and then when Saddam retaliated and violated the no-fly zone, use that as a justification of war and eventual regime change.<sup>37</sup> The plan was cancelled by Central Command chief Gen. Tommy Franks, but these fighters who were trained by the CIA were used for disruptive activities in Iraq prior to the invasion. This was therefore an attempt to manipulate the type of provocation element of coercive diplomacy. A clear violation of the no-fly zone by Saddam was a more direct provocation than suspected (but as yet unproven) WMD and

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<sup>34</sup> Robert Jervis, *American Foreign Policy in a New Era*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005), pg. 85.

<sup>35</sup> Richard Ned Lebow, *Between Peace and War*, (Baltimore, Md: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), pg. 25.

<sup>36</sup> Alexander L. George & William E. Simons, ‘Findings and Conclusions,’ in Alexander L. George and William E. Simons, *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, pg. 272.

<sup>37</sup> Julian Borger, ‘Book says CIA tried to provoke Saddam to war,’ *The Guardian*, September 7, 2006.

terrorism links. However, as it happened, in the post 9/11 period, Washington preferred to go with ‘weightier’ issues with which to justify type ‘C’ coercive diplomacy.

We can therefore argue that the Bush administration forced a crisis in order to justify a military attack. But it can also be argued that the more realistic and serious the threat of military attack, the better the chance of success of coercive diplomacy. Thus creating such a hostile situation can force the adversary to realize the seriousness of the coercer’s threats. However, while the type of provocation can be used to acquire international legitimacy for coercive actions, this legitimacy also has to be present in the minds of policymakers in the target regime. As the section on perceptions shows, this was lacking in the mind of the main decision-maker in Iraq – Saddam Hussein.

### Implications:

#### **How did the magnitude of objectives impact on coercive diplomacy? Did the U.S. try to modify/moderate its demands and objectives?**

In its campaign against Iraq, the U.S. proclaimed several objectives. These included prevention of WMD proliferation/acquisition by Saddam Hussein, ending his regime’s alleged links to Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups, and finally, democracy promotion in the Middle East. As is clear, coercive diplomacy is most effective when limited objectives are being pursued. However, in this case, the Bush administration retained these objectives and in fact, posited that only regime change would effectively complete the mission.

Despite these multiple goals, the administration did not modify or moderate its objectives. On the contrary, in order to justify the regime change agenda, newer objectives were added to make the case to the American people and the international community. Thus, Saddam’s links to WMD production and acquisition as well as alleged Al Qaeda connections were used as initial justifications. Subsequently, when WMD links were finally refuted, democracy promotion was forcefully adopted<sup>38</sup> to retroactively justify regime change. Thus, in pursuit of Type C coercive diplomacy, Washington kept adding Type B goals (behavior change objectives) that were either refuted (WMD, Al Qaeda

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<sup>38</sup> Robert Jervis, ‘Reports, Politics, and Intelligence Failures: The Case of Iraq,’ *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1, pg. 8.

links) or which were too broad and contradicted limited objectives (democracy promotion in the Middle East).

**Table 11: Iraq – Objectives**

<b><u>Objectives</u></b>		<b>Clarity of Objectives</b>	<b>Magnitude of demands</b>	<b>Type of provocation</b>
Type ‘C’ coercive diplomacy  Regime change Arguments →	- WMD proliferation - Connections to Terrorism - Promotion of democracy	Reduced clarity of objectives.	Very high magnitude, broad objectives	Type of provocation not a clear violation of territory or international law, but speculation on WMD connections and terror links, therefore, difficult to prove case.

## **CREDIBILITY OF THREATS**

While U.S. military capability was considerable and up to the task of dismantling the regime, Saddam Hussein did not take this capacity seriously and implicitly refused to accept the credibility of these threats. Saddam assumed that the U.S. would never invade Iraq because it did not have the capacity to tolerate mass casualties in battle and also felt that the U.S. was a ‘paper tiger’ incapable of a strong forceful response.<sup>39</sup> This reason for this confidence was that U.S. military strategy and action in the decade preceding the 2003 invasion did not measure up to Saddam’s definition of a threat.

During the first Gulf War, the U.S. spent considerable time in its air campaign before sending in ground troops, and even then it permitted most of the Republican Guard to survive, actions which did not pose any threat to the regime itself. Furthermore, after the war, the U.S. did not come to the aid of the Shia rebels who were then brutally defeated by Saddam’s forces. U.S. actions in other areas of the world also did not provoke any apprehension in Saddam. U.S. evacuation of its troops from Somalia in 1993 was, for

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<sup>39</sup> Kevin Woods, Michael R. Pease, Mark E. Stout, Williamson Murray, and James G. Lacey, *Iraqi Perspectives Project*, Joint Center for Operational Analysis (JCOA), Joint Forces Command, March 2006, pg. 15.

Saddam, a confirmation of his preconceived notions. Even when the U.S. launched its air attack on Serbia it did not change these opinions, because by then his regime had demonstrated that it could survive a no-fly zone and U.S. air attacks.<sup>40</sup> In the most recent episode before the 2003 invasion, that of Afghanistan in 2001, Saddam felt that the U.S. had overthrown a weak enemy with yet another air campaign and Special Forces soldiers, while the bulk of the ground war was conducted by the Northern Alliance. Furthermore, when the U.S. had its chance to capture bin Laden in the Tora Bora region of Afghanistan, it flinched and let him escape.<sup>41</sup>

Therefore, this suggests that Saddam took selective lessons from the pattern of U.S. military actions in Iraq and elsewhere and applied it to the most recent crisis. Saddam therefore concluded that the kind of military action that the U.S. was used to performing would not be a threat to his regime's survival. In particular, the use of a massive ground force was a key issue. Since, in past operations, the U.S. had not committed the kind of ground force that would be required to overthrow his regime, Saddam was confident that it would not do so this time either.

According to former Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz, "A few weeks before the attacks, Saddam still thought the U.S. would not use ground forces. He thought they would not fight a ground war because it would be too costly for the Americans."<sup>42</sup> Saddam also changed his defensive strategy to suit this mindset. In December 2002, Saddam changed his plan for the defense of the capital. The long-standing plan had been to deploy Iraqi forces along any invasion route in order to degrade any incoming army. The new plan called for the troops to be stationed in defensive rings around Baghdad.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, Saddam's attitude reflected a priority to defend the capital, if the invading arm was able to reach there, while the loss of the rest of the country was acceptable.

Before the invasion began, one opinion stated that in order to depose Saddam Hussein, the U.S. would have to achieve control of Baghdad and that if Washington was

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<sup>40</sup> *Iraqi Perspectives Project*, pp. 16.

<sup>41</sup> *Iraqi Perspectives Project*, pp. 16.

<sup>42</sup> Michael R. Gordon & Bernard E. Trainor, 'Even as U.S. Invaded, Hussein Saw Iraqi Unrest as Top Threat,' *The New York Times*, March 12, 2006.

<sup>43</sup> Michael R. Gordon, 'German Intelligence Gave U.S. Iraqi Defense Plan, Report Says,' *The New York Times*, February 27, 2006.



not able to lure significant sections of the Iraqi military to defect, a major invasion force would be required.<sup>44</sup> Apart from the military aspects, the U.S. would also have to form a full-fledged administration for the whole country. Even on the question of Saddam's pursuit of WMD capabilities, U.S. analysts were not certain prior to the 2003 invasion, how effective earlier U.S. strategies against Saddam's regime, such as Operation Desert Fox had been.<sup>45</sup>

The existing war plan (in 2001) against Iraq, Op Plan 1003, was seen as a cumbersome strategy involving 500,000 troops, and was a replication of the first Gulf War.<sup>46</sup> This was not acceptable to the top defense leadership, especially Secretary Rumsfeld who wanted a leaner invasion force and a plan that could be implemented very quickly, even by spring 2002.<sup>47</sup> Later, the Army Chief of Staff, General Eric Shinseki, testified in the weeks before the invasion that the occupation of postwar Iraq would require several hundred thousand troops, a figure that was dismissed by Deputy Defense Secretary Wolfowitz.<sup>48</sup>

Two points need to be noted here. First, that the original war plan for invading Iraq and overthrowing Saddam Hussein required about half a million troops and this requirement was also recognized by outside analysts. Second, Saddam did not believe the U.S. could invade with a force that was sufficient to bring about regime change. And this seemingly insufficient force was exactly what was deployed. Thus taking into account Saddam's preconceived notions on U.S. capacity and intentions, the eventual invasion force was less than adequate, detracting from the credibility of U.S. threats, at least in the Iraqi ruler's decision-making framework.

Evidence that Saddam did not expect U.S. forces to reach the capital also comes from the fact that he had no real plans to escape Baghdad - and his eventual departure from

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<sup>44</sup> Faleh A. Jabar, 'The Iraqi Army and the Anti-Army: Some Reflections on the Role of the Military,' in Toby Dodge & Steven Simon (ed.) *Iraq at the Crossroads: State and Society in the Shadow of Regime Change*, Adelphi Paper 354, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, January 2003, pg. 123.

<sup>45</sup> See, James A. Russell, 'WMD Proliferation and Conventional Counterforce: The Case of Iraq,' Strategic Insights, Naval Postgraduate School, July 3, 2002.

<sup>46</sup> Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, pg. 36.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, pp. 40-43.

<sup>48</sup> Eric Schmitt, "Pentagon Contradicts General on Iraq Occupation Force's Size," *The New York Times*, February 28, 2003.

there was conducted in haste.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, two months before the invasion Saddam ordered the Iraqi air force to stay away from the conflict. His reasoning was that the air force planes were extremely inferior to the opponent's and therefore they needed to be shielded for use in future campaigns.<sup>50</sup> Given his existing sense of security threats, these campaigns were probably meant to be against internal rebellions or Iran. Nevertheless, some recent evidence (through captured documents) also indicates that there was some planning in Baghdad for an insurgency campaign in the pre-war period. One opinion has it that Saddam Hussein's regime did not concede to the U.S. also because it decided to rely on an anti-occupation insurgency which would make it too costly for the U.S.-lead coalition to remain in Iraq.<sup>51</sup>

This insurgency was based initially on Saddam's fanatical Fedayeen fighters, who had originally been formed to deal with internal threats, especially from the Shias. The ferocious fight by the Fedayeen, who were dispersed around the country, was not expected by the U.S. military leadership in the run up to the invasion.<sup>52</sup> Thus, Saddam's effective military strategy involved a strong defensive ring around the capital (dominated by the Republican Guard) and Fedayeen throughout the country to bog down the invading forces. Even after the invasion began, Saddam continued to believe that his forces were blocking the advance of Coalition forces, on the basis of optimistic reports from regime officials.<sup>53</sup>

Thus, Saddam's confidence was based on two factors. First, that the U.S. did not have the stomach for a costly ground war and therefore, U.S. threats were simply not credible enough. Second, even if Washington did attempt an invasion, Saddam's deployment of Republican Guard troops around the capital and the Fedayeen elsewhere would make the regime change objective too costly for the U.S., leading to its defeat. The

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<sup>49</sup> Michael R. Gordon & Bernard E. Trainor, 'Iraqi Leader, in Frantic Flight, Eluded U.S. Strikes,' *The New York Times*, March 12, 2006.

<sup>50</sup> Kevin Woods, James Lacey, and Williamson Murray, 'Saddam's Delusions: The View From Inside,' *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2006.

<sup>51</sup> Thomas E. Ricks, 'In Iraq, Military Forgot Lessons of Vietnam,' *The Washington Post*, July 23, 2006, pg. A01. This news report bases this assertion on captured documents from Iraq.

<sup>52</sup> Michael R. Gordon & Bernard E. Trainor, 'Dash to Baghdad Left Top U.S. Generals Divided,' *The New York Times*, March 13, 2006.

<sup>53</sup> *Iraqi Perspectives Project*, pg. 32.

regime's attitude was that at worst U.S. troops would occupy southern Iraq and let Saddam remain in power.<sup>54</sup>

Therefore, important contextual variables and variables favoring success in coercive diplomacy were operating against the U.S. due to the lack of credible threats as seen by the Iraqi dictator. The image of war was not an issue for Saddam as long as the regime survived, and in any case the pattern of U.S. military action suggested to him that a ground invasion was unlikely. For the same reason, the opponent's (Saddam) fear of unacceptable escalation was not an issue either. The conclusion, for Saddam was that the U.S. just would not escalate to a level that could pose a threat to his hold on power.

### Implications:

#### **How did the credibility of U.S. threats impact on the success/failure of coercive diplomacy?**

As this section showed, Saddam did not take seriously the ability or the willingness of the U.S. military to attack Baghdad successfully in order to overthrow him. Therefore, there was no sense of urgency in his calculations; nor was there a fear of escalation on the part of the adversary. In his view, the worst case scenario was that the U.S. would occupy southern Iraq while a fortified Baghdad would remain under his control.

Therefore, two points are crucial. First, Saddam cast doubts on the Type C coercive agenda of the U.S. In his calculations, the U.S. would be satisfied with a less than-Type C objective, such as the occupation of a limited portion of the country, which though not a Type B objective (behavior change) was not a Type C goal either. Thus, Washington simply was not able to impress on Saddam the extent of its coercive objectives.

The second point, which follows from the first, is that in such a scenario, Saddam was not looking for reassurances from the U.S. that his regime was secure. As the section on international strategic environment shows, external actors such as Germany and France were able to provide some level of implicit reassurance that his regime would be maintained. The following table summarizes the arguments in this section:

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid, pg. 31.

**Table 12: Iraq – Credibility of U.S. threats**

<b><u>Credibility of threats</u></b>	<b>Image of war (against U.S.)</b>	<b>Threat of unacceptable escalation?</b>	<b>Credibility of U.S. threat</b>
U.S. not believed to have resolve for a ground war	No apprehension as past U.S. actions suggested to Saddam that there would be no ground war, the only viable military threat from U.S. to his regime.	No threat of unacceptable escalation as Saddam did not believe U.S. would escalate to a ground invasion, which would have been unacceptable.	Therefore, according to Saddam's calculations, credibility of threat not high.
Fedayeen and Republican Guard would defeat U.S. forces.		Even if the U.S. did escalate, Fedayeen and Republican Guard troops would defeat them.	Therefore, Saddam believed credibility of U.S. threat low.

## PERCEPTIONS

Perceptions of the adversary, its objectives, and one's own objectives and interests play a major role in formulating the attitudes of either party in a coercive equation. An important approach to studying international relations involves examining an actor's beliefs and its images of the opponent as a way of explaining its actions.<sup>55</sup> The concept of coercive diplomacy states that assumptions of rationality must be balanced with adequate knowledge of the cultural, social, and religious milieu in which the adversary conducts its decision-making. The coercer also has to take into account the opponent's threat perceptions and preference order in which it places its objectives. Thus it is entirely possible that perceptions of the coercer and the adversary might differ and this impacts on several factors which favor successful coercive diplomacy such as the image of war, and the opponent's fear of unacceptable escalation.

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<sup>55</sup> Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), pg. 29-30.

As some analysts have stated, a key point during the run up to the war that Saddam would not opt for deception if there was nothing to hide, missed the problem of mirror-imaging.<sup>56</sup> This implies a belief that the adversary would act in ways and according to standards and belief systems similar to the coercer. In this case, prior to the war, the U.S. did not take into account Saddam's threat perceptions and opinions of U.S. military power.

### Saddam's perception of regional threats

One important question is why Saddam did not declare more forcefully that he did not possess weapons of mass destruction. This has a direct bearing on the effect of implicit coercive diplomacy. If Saddam Hussein had been able to prove unequivocally to the international community that there were no WMD, then the most important element of Washington's case against regime change would have been demolished. According to the Iraqi Perspectives Project, which studied captured documents and interviewed senior regime officials, Saddam was apprehensive that if it were unequivocally confirmed that Iraq did not have any WMD, it would encourage his adversaries to attack.<sup>57</sup> An ambiguous stance on WMD constituted what the Republican Guard commander General Hamdani termed as 'deterrence by doubt.'<sup>58</sup> But this purposeful ambiguity also constituted resistance to the implicit coercion by U.S. military action.

Saddam's adversaries included the U.S. but he had discounted the possibility of a U.S. ground offensive. Saddam was also convinced that so long as he could maintain the façade of possible WMD possession, his adversaries would be deterred. Even his top generals assumed that their regime had some weapons of mass destruction (such as poison gas and germ weapons), and in fact, when they were told the truth just prior to the invasion, they assumed that Saddam was lying.<sup>59</sup> His refusal to concede was directly related to his need to protect his arsenal from destruction by the U.S., especially in view of

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<sup>56</sup> Ron Huisken, 'Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: A Case of Intelligence Following Policy,' pg. 32.

<sup>57</sup> Fred Kaplan, 'Mystery Solved,' Slate.com, March 13, 2006, <http://www.slate.com/id/2137953/>

<sup>58</sup> Michael R. Gordon & Bernard E. Trainor, 'Even as U.S. invaded, Hussein Saw Iraqi Unrest as Top Threat,' *The New York Times*, March 12, 2006.

<sup>59</sup> Steve Coll, 'Deluded,' *The New Yorker*, April 3, 2006.

the perceived threat from Iran.<sup>60</sup> If Saddam had backed away and given up power, it is fair to assume that most major Iraqi weapon systems that were present would have been destroyed, leaving the country vulnerable to the threat from Iran.

According to the Iraqi Perspectives Project, Saddam perceived Iran as the main threat to this rule (Israel and Turkey were the other regional threats), though in his calculation the threat had less to do with Iran's military capability and more on account of its capacity to stir up Iran's Shia population into a rebellion.<sup>61</sup>

The threat from Iran had lingered on long after the 1980-88 war between the two countries. Iran and Iraq have been traditional rivals in the region, even more so after the 1979 revolution. The resulting eight year war was sparked by grievances and objectives that remained for years afterward – desire for regional dominance, rivalry and suspicion over the religious divide between the secular Sunni nationalist dictatorship and the theocratic Shia regime. Ill-will and bitterness between the two countries remained after Iraq emerged victorious in the war. During the nineties, Baghdad and Tehran regarded each other as the main security threats, rather than the U.S., which had actually sought to contain the two countries.<sup>62</sup> After the U.S. increased pressure on Iraq 2001 onwards, Tehran also stepped up its contacts with Iraqi opposition leaders such as the INC's Ahmed Chalabi and Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani, besides facilitating contacts between Chalabi and the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), which was based in Iran.<sup>63</sup> Thus the Tehran regime was starting to lay the ground for eventual changes in Baghdad, even though it maintained contacts with elements in the Saddam regime.

Therefore, to a certain extent, Tehran's theocratic regime was a threat to Saddam's rule, but not an immediate one. A second perceived threat for Saddam was Israel. During the first Gulf War, Saddam had attacked Israeli cities with rockets in an attempt to provoke it into the war which would then have threatened the U.S.-led coalition. At that time, Saddam enjoyed considerable support from Palestinian groups, especially the PLO which

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<sup>60</sup> James Glanz, 'Shades of Supergun Evoke Hussein's Thirst for Arms,' *The New York Times*, September 10, 2006.

<sup>61</sup> *Iraqi Perspectives Project*, pg. 25.

<sup>62</sup> Anoushiravan Ehteshami, 'Iran-Iraq Relations after Saddam,' *The Washington Quarterly*, Autumn 2003, pg. 122.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 123.

came out in his support. Saddam, who saw himself as a modern day Saladin, had therefore always played up his support for the Palestinian people in an attempt to gain a major leadership role in the Arab world. Therefore with this track record, Saddam expected an attack from Israel at some point. Hence, even after he told members of his Revolutionary Command Council that Iraq did not possess WMD, Saddam refused to allow public confirmation of this reality on the grounds that it would persuade Israel to launch an attack.<sup>64</sup>

### Saddam's decision-making

Saddam's view of the U.S. threat to invade was further impaired by his ignorance of the Iraqi military's weaknesses. By 2002, his direct contact with military units had ended and his view of his own military was now derived from highly unreliable sources, including senior Republican Guard commanders who misled him about the state of their forces.<sup>65</sup> Lack of adequate and reliable information was a major problem in the entire decision-making and intelligence apparatus of the regime. One line of inquiry in decision-making also talks about the concept of 'defensive avoidance.' This states that a decision-maker can avoid making decisions because that allows "an escape from having to recognize the decisional dilemma."<sup>66</sup> Such a mental framework fits in the case of Saddam Hussein and his threat perceptions. His decision to focus on other possible threats could have been a way of avoiding a decision on the main threat.

Furthermore, apart from lack of adequate information, the decision-making process itself was faulty. According to officials from the former regime, Saddam's decision-making was frequently, and especially with important issues, conducted alone and according to former Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, it was tinged with an 'unrealistic outlook.'<sup>67</sup> Top generals and other senior regime officials were kept out of the loop on the

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<sup>64</sup> Kevin Woods, James Lacey, and Williamson Murray, 'Saddam's Delusions: The View From Inside.'

<sup>65</sup> Kevin Woods, Michael R. Pease, Mark E. Stout, Williamson Murray, and James G. Lacey, *Iraqi Perspectives Project*, Joint Center for Operational Analysis (JCOA), Joint Forces Command, March 2006.

<sup>66</sup> Alexander L. George, 'The Impact of Crisis-Induced Stress on Decision Making,' in Frederic Solomon & Robert Q. Marston, *The Medical Implications of Nuclear War*, (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1986), pg. 538.

<sup>67</sup> *Iraqi Perspectives Project*, pg. 15.

most important issues, such as WMD. This attitude arose from a sense of distrust and paranoia over possible coup attempts. In fact Saddam so feared an internal coup that even in the run up to the invasion he refused to allow his senior military officials to plan seriously for fighting back (except for the defense of Baghdad).<sup>68</sup> Such an analysis was in tune with an influential personality profile of Saddam which stated that, “while he was psychologically in touch with reality, he was often politically out of touch with reality.”<sup>69</sup> Here, the assumption of rationality problem in coercive diplomacy is again relevant, because information was not being processed by the decision-maker in a manner that would have led to a more effective appreciation of the threat.

According to one senior Ba’ath Party official, “Saddam had an idea about Iraq’s conventional and potential unconventional capabilities, but never an accurate one because of the extensive lying occurring in that area.”<sup>70</sup> Two conclusions can be reached here. First, that Saddam was unaware of the real strength of his conventional forces, which is why he assumed they could resist U.S. coercion. Second, with respect to the non-existent WMD program, since he was in control of it, and had been disseminating untruth about it to his generals, he could maintain the flow of information in this sector. Either way, both his senior officers and Saddam himself had illusions about the real level and quality of forces. For Saddam, the illusion was over the state of conventional forces, while for the senior staff, the illusion was over the existence of weapons of mass destruction.

## Implications:

### **How did the issue of perceptions impact on the process of coercive diplomacy?**

This section showed that in order to deter possible coercion from perceived threats (Iran, Iraq’s Shia minority, Israel, Turkey) Saddam had to maintain his bluff of WMD possession. A second objective of his bluff was also to maintain a strong leadership in the face of external threats. But the paradox here is that in his quest to deter coercion from

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<sup>68</sup> Steve Coll, ‘Deluded,’ *The New Yorker*, April 3, 2006.

<sup>69</sup> Jerrold M. Post & Amatzia Baram, “‘Saddam is Iraq: Iraq is Saddam’ (Until Operation Iraqi Freedom),” in Barry R. Schneider & Jerrold M. Post, *Know Thy Enemy: Profiles of Adversary Leaders and Their Strategic Cultures*, (Defense Dept., United States Air Force Counterproliferation Center, 2003), pg. 171.

<sup>70</sup> Kevin Woods, James Lacey, and Williamson Murray, ‘Saddam’s Delusions: The View From Inside.’



perceived threats, he helped confirm the suspicions of the actual threat (U.S.). In order to perpetuate the ambiguity from the bluff, the chances of Saddam actually coming clean on his supposed WMD arsenal diminished further, and with it, the chances of successful coercive diplomacy. This case (as well as the next chapter on the North Korean nuclear crisis) shows that in a coercive equation in which WMD possession is suspected of one side (but not confirmed) some degree of bluffing by the coercer or the target is to be expected.

While Saddam was able to manipulate the WMD perceptions of his adversaries, his view of Iraq's actual conventional strength was far from accurate, on account of a dysfunctional decision-making system. His misplaced confidence in the Republican Guard and the Fedayeen encouraged him to believe that U.S. forces could be prevented from capturing Baghdad. This further damaged the credibility of U.S. threats for him, and therefore, there was even less of a reason for him to concede to Washington's belligerence. Furthermore, his apprehensions of an external threat came mainly from Iran, and not from the U.S. Therefore, by not prioritizing the U.S. threat, Saddam's own hierarchy of objectives was subverted, and there was no reason for conceding to the U.S.

The following table summarizes the arguments from this section:

**Table 13: Iraq - Perceptions**

<b><u>Perceptions</u></b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Coercive diplomacy</b>
Perceived threat from Iran	Saddam apprehensive of war, but from Iran and internal elements, and not from the U.S.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Refused to elevate threat of U.S. ground invasion to its rightful place on the list of perceived threats.</li> <li>- Façade of WMD prevented a confirmation that Iraq possessed WMD, and prevented any concession to coercion.</li> </ul>
Defective decision-making: Saddam's illusions over state of conventional forces, especially Republican Guard and Fedayeen	Allowed Saddam to believe that U.S. could be prevented from taking Baghdad	

## INTERNAL FACTORS

Domestic factors affected decision-making in both, the Saddam regime as well as the Bush administration in the run up to Operation Iraqi Freedom. For Saddam, the main internal factor relevant to this discussion was the threat that he perceived from elements within Iraq. According to one analysis, one potential development that would have seriously damaged his support base was if it was demonstrated that he was not in a position to sustain the country's WMD program.<sup>71</sup> This suggests that while the U.S. was gearing up to foster regime change in Baghdad, Saddam's priorities were elsewhere. Therefore, this defective priority order of threats meant that Saddam was unable to process the danger of the U.S. threat adequately, leading to failure of coercion. When we consider Saddam's threat perception from Iran and Israel as well as internal elements, it becomes clear that while the U.S. was implicitly coercing his regime, Saddam was employing the threat of WMD possession in a bid to deter other threats.

### Threat of coup/rebellion against Saddam

Saddam Hussein had led Iraq as President with full dictatorial control since 1979 and served as a powerful vice-president for ten years before that. From his early days in the Ba'ath Party regime Saddam had developed a reputation for suppressing any political rivals, including his predecessor, Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr. This threat perception was also extended to rivals in the Arab world, especially Syrian President Hafez al-Assad, who passed away in 2000. Within Iraq his regime had brutally clamped down on all potential internal threats, especially from the Shia and Kurdish populations.

After the first Gulf War, Saddam's support within Iraq eroded, and even within the military and his tribal base, there was dissatisfaction. This occurred for several reasons. Discontent within the Iraqi people grew in the 1990s as they saw Saddam and his coterie make huge profits from oil smuggling, while the general population faced increasing

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<sup>71</sup> Jerrold M. Post & Amatzia Baram, "Saddam is Iraq: Iraq is Saddam' (Until Operation Iraqi Freedom)," pg. 184.

deprivation on account of UN sanctions.<sup>72</sup> Profits from the Oil for Food program that were supposed to assist the Iraqi people were instead siphoned off by the ruling regime. The growing sense of threat to his regime was also heightened by several coup attempts during the nineties. These included suspected plots from within the elite Republican Guard, which was responsible for protecting the regime.<sup>73</sup> The U.S. also facilitated the formation of the Iraqi National Congress (INC) an umbrella organization of overseas Iraqi opposition groups.

These developments led to a siege mentality in the Iraqi dictator and very elaborate security arrangements were put in place, led by the Organization of Special Security, which was commanded by Saddam's son, Qusay.<sup>74</sup> Dissension within Saddam's innermost circle came to the fore in 1994 when his two sons-in-law who were from the same tribe (Tikriti), defected and provided western agencies with considerable information on Iraq's WMD program. Increasingly in the 1990s, even tribes that had been closely connected to his own and were influential were looked upon with suspicion. Meanwhile, the Kurdish and Shia populations in the north and the south rebelled and were brutally put down. Also put down was the most elaborate coup attempt, organized by the London-based Iraqi National Accord (INA) and backed by the CIA, which involved numerous officials stationed at various levels of the regime.

This siege mentality and obsession with internal threats affected his priorities in the period before the U.S. invasion. As American forces invaded, despite the advice of his top generals, Hussein refused to order counter-measures to stop their advance to Baghdad. One senior officer, Lt. Gen. Raad Majid al-Hamdani repeatedly requested orders to blow up a bridge on the Euphrates River that would have slowed or stopped the advance of U.S. forces.<sup>75</sup> However, Saddam's concern was that the bridges would be required to transfer troops to the south in case the Shia population there rebelled. Indeed, another reason why Saddam needed to maintain the façade of possessing WMD was to deal with internal threats from Shia and Kurdish populations. He already had a track record of using

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<sup>72</sup> Con Coughlin, *Saddam: His Rise and Fall*, (New York, NY: Ecco, 2002), pp. 289-94.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, pg. 287.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, pg. 296.

<sup>75</sup> Michael R. Gordon & Bernard E. Trainor, 'Even as U.S. Invaded, Hussein Saw Iraqi Unrest as Top Threat.'

chemical weapons against them during uprisings in the 1980s, killing thousands. Even if, by 2003, he did not possess adequate stocks of chemical weapons, he had to maintain the façade in order to wield an effective threat.

Furthermore, paramilitary forces created by Saddam in the 1990s, especially the Fedayeen and the Al Quds Army, were tasked with putting down rebellions by Shia and Kurdish populations. This impacted negatively on the state of the regular army because valuable manpower that could have gone to it was diverted to the Fedayeen for internal security duties. It was only as the invasion began that Saddam decided these forces would also be tasked with blocking American forces in the countryside (as stated in the section on threat credibility).

The Shia rebellion after the first Gulf War was an important consideration in Saddam's decision-making. The Shia, which constitutes a majority in Iraq, had long been dominated by the mainly Sunni Baathist tribal regime. Shia populations in the Gulf region began to reassert their sectarian identity after the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran. Following this, the Saddam regime began large scale purges and repression and killing of Shia; according to one account, in 1991 alone, 30,000 Iraqi Shias were killed.<sup>76</sup> Later, after the Gulf war there was another Shia uprising which the regime brutally clamped down upon. Thus from the Shia perspective, there was considerable animosity to Saddam's rule. Indeed this has been reflected in the post-Saddam era when Shia parties and groups have increasingly asserted their power and have demonstrated considerable rivalry with the Sunni parties.

Therefore, with this kind of record toward the Shia, for Saddam, internal upheaval and regime threats were a constant worry. According to one analysis, based on his personality profile, Saddam was in the habit of exploiting international crises to quell domestic unrest.<sup>77</sup> The theory was that if he emerged victorious in the confrontation, this would elevate his standing in his country, and in fact the rest of the Arab world too. Saddam's confrontation with Iran, Syria (1977), and finally Kuwait all came when he tried to deal with internal dissension among Shias and other sections of the population by

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<sup>76</sup> Vali Nasr, 'Regional Implications of Shi'a Revival in Iraq,' *The Washington Quarterly*, Summer 2004, pg. 11.

<sup>77</sup> Post & Baram, "'Saddam is Iraq: Iraq is Saddam' (Until Operation Iraqi Freedom)," pp. 213-214.

provoking external crises. Therefore, one reason why Saddam did not take U.S. threats too seriously is because his intention could have been to manipulate it and turn it into an advantage and thereby strengthen his position. As stated earlier, he did not take American threats too seriously, and had already concluded that even if the invasion took place, his forces, especially the Republican Guard and the Fedayeen, would defeat them.

Apart from fear of rebellion by disaffected populations, Saddam was also concerned about the possibility of a coup from among his senior leadership. The result was that the senior military leadership was replete with officers who were chosen for their loyalty rather than competence. It also meant that as the invasion began, Hussein insisted on making the smallest military decisions himself, not trusting the military leadership. Apprehensive about a possible coup, Saddam also ordered regular army troops to be stationed near Kurdistan and near the Iranian border so they could be away from the capital. Only the Special Republican Guard, responsible for security of Baghdad, was allowed into the city, and even then an incompetent officer was placed in command.<sup>78</sup> Further, units deployed as the invasion began were prevented from communicating with each other to avoid the possibility of a successful coup.

Prioritization of internal threats from disaffected populations as well as the military distracted attention from the threat of a ground invasion by the U.S.-led coalition. Saddam, therefore, failed to appreciate the extent of the military threat facing him. Moreover, this breakdown in the decision-making framework diminished the chances for successful coercive diplomacy.

### Decision-making structure in U.S. and the failure of coercive diplomacy

As stated earlier, influential elements within and outside the Bush administration (mostly known collectively as neoconservatives) refused to accept that the invasion of Iraq would require hundreds of thousands of troops. The most prominent example of this attitude was the refusal of Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz to accept Army Chief Gen. Eric Shinseki's estimate that the invasion would require much more than the 130,000 troops

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<sup>78</sup> Michael R. Gordon & Bernard E. Trainor, 'Even as U.S. invaded, Hussein Saw Iraqi Unrest as Top Threat.'

allocated. Such an attitude was part of a closed decision-making structure termed a ‘cabal’ between Vice President Cheney and Defense Secretary Rumsfeld by a high-ranking State Department official.<sup>79</sup> Because this decision-making framework refused to accept that the invasion and the post-invasion period would require a lot more investment in terms of troops, money and expertise, it led to faulty war-planning and eventually, failure of coercive diplomacy. This failure took place because the U.S. was unable to carry out its threats effectively and was in fact bogged down in the post-invasion occupation of Iraq. This was extremely costly on several counts – casualties (both American and Iraqi), financial investment, civil war-like situation, Iraq as a base for terrorists.

Soon after Baghdad fell, it became clear that the main adversaries fighting U.S. forces were the Shia and Sunni insurgents, many of whom increasingly developed logistical networks from neighboring states. With the relatively limited number of troops sent to Iraq, the Bush administration had failed to prepare for the violence and instability of the post-Saddam period. But it is not as if the administration was unaware of such an eventuality. Documents released in November 2006 revealed that the 1999 ‘Desert Crossing’ war games conducted by the U.S. government concluded that 400,000 troops would be needed for an invasion of Iraq.<sup>80</sup> Even with these numbers, chaos and a failed state were likely consequences.<sup>81</sup>

Intelligence prior to the war also warned that insurgent groups in Iraq were getting ready to fight American forces and that more Iraqis would join them as the occupation continued.<sup>82</sup> However, Secretary Rumsfeld’s war plan, made in consultation with Central Command chief, General Tommy Franks, refused to pay any heed to these warnings, and instead assumed that Iraqi soldiers would surrender and the civilian population would welcome the coalition forces.<sup>83</sup>

This dysfunction in the decision-making process was a reflection of broader doctrinal differences on the shape of U.S. defense policy. In particular, the clash between

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<sup>79</sup> Edward Alden ‘‘Cheney cabal hijacked US foreign policy,’’ *The Financial Times*, October 20, 2005. The term was used by Col. Lawrence Wilkerson, Chief of Staff to then Secretary of State Colin Powell.

<sup>80</sup> John Heilprin, ‘1999 War Games Foresaw Problems in Iraq,’ *The Washington Post*, November 5, 2006.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> John Diamond, ‘Prewar intelligence predicted Iraqi insurgency,’ *USA Today*, October 24, 2004.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

the Powell Doctrine and Secretary Rumsfeld's plans for the future of U.S. military operations contributed to the complete lack of reassurances to Saddam's Iraq by the U.S. as well as the post-invasion quagmire that the U.S. forces found themselves in.

The Powell Doctrine<sup>84</sup> essentially states that any U.S. military force should be applied only in pursuit of limited, clearly defined objectives that are grounded in the national interest, with overwhelming force to guarantee a quick victory, and a clear exit strategy.<sup>85</sup> This doctrine also concluded that stabilizing or ending a conflict always requires troops on the ground, and that most advanced technologically superior weaponry and equipment are no substitute for this.<sup>86</sup> On the other hand Secretary Rumsfeld came into office in January 2001 pledging a transformation of the military, a goal that acquired additional impetus after 9/11. According to Rumsfeld, the U.S. military needed to be "flexible, light and agile" to combat threats from actors such as terrorist groups.<sup>87</sup> Under Rumsfeld's plan, technologically superior U.S. forces would be able to defeat adversaries in any theater without the need for massive numbers of troops.<sup>88</sup> Thus, Secretary Rumsfeld's transformational goals for the military were in clear opposition to Gen. Powell's cautious approach, built on the experience of the Vietnam war.

After 9/11, as the Bush administration commenced preparing for the Iraq campaign, for Rumsfeld, this war was to be the arena for applying, testing and modifying the new transformational strategies for the military.<sup>89</sup> By late 2002, the Pentagon had combined a 'refreshed' Iraq war strategy with the goal of military transformation.<sup>90</sup> However, by incorporating the Iraq campaign within such broad objectives of military modernization, the administration, and specifically the Pentagon, reduced the opportunity for diplomacy or concessions from the Saddam regime.

Apart from combat operational planning, post-invasion efforts were handicapped on other levels too. First, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), responsible for

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<sup>84</sup> Named after Gen. Colin Powell, who formulated it, and is similar to the earlier Weinberger Doctrine.

<sup>85</sup> Mark Sappenfield, 'Military strategy in Iraq: What is it?' *Christian Science Monitor*, October 17, 2005.

<sup>86</sup> David Jablonsky, 'Army Transformation: A Tale of Two Doctrines,' *Parameters*, Autumn 2001, Vol. XXXI, No. 3, pp. 43-62.

<sup>87</sup> Donald H. Rumsfeld, 'Defense for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,' *The Washington Post*, May 22, 2003.

<sup>88</sup> Bruce Nussbaum, 'It's Time To Shelve The Rumsfeld Doctrine,' *BusinessWeek*, April 26, 2004.

<sup>89</sup> Bob Woodward, *State of Denial*, (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2006), pg. 81.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 83.

administering and rebuilding Iraq, was not allotted the required number of personnel to establish offices in the 18 provinces in Iraq.<sup>91</sup> Second, even among the personnel who were dispatched, a substantial number had no requisite experience, and were sent solely because of their conservative beliefs and Republican Party connections.<sup>92</sup> According to journalists and reconstruction officials, with their misplaced priorities (such as trying to institute a flat tax and trying to set up a modern, computerized stock market), these inexperienced officials alienated the Iraqi people.<sup>93</sup> Finally CPA officials disregarded the considered advice of military officials who were dealing with the Iraqi people on a day to day basis. These are merely some of the missteps of the post-invasion planning, a process that was accorded low priority. The purpose of this brief analysis is to show that by failing in the post-Saddam period (both, in terms of anticipating the insurgency and in terms of reconstruction efforts), the U.S. failed to carry out the threat element of its coercive diplomacy effectively.

A secondary internal shortcoming lay on the opposite side of the political fence. Essentially, this argument is that the push toward invasion of Iraq by neoconservative elements was not met with adequate skepticism or roadblocks from domestic institutions such as the Congress as well as the press. If the press or political groups had enquired into the Bush administration's strategy for Iraq more thoroughly, it might have forced a more effective appraisal of the requirements of a successful invasion and post-war stabilization. Thus the absence of a more questioning media contributed to ineffective checks on policy-making. One example here is the lack of interest displayed by newspapers in the U.S. in covering surveillance operations in 2002-03 by U.S. intelligence agencies on UN delegations of countries crucial to favorable Iraq resolutions.<sup>94</sup> While newspapers outside the U.S. gave considerable coverage to these activities, even liberal papers such as the *New*

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<sup>91</sup> Rajiv Chandrasekaran, 'Who Killed Iraq?' *Foreign Policy*, Sept/Oct 2006, pg. 39.

<sup>92</sup> Joshua Micah Marshall, Laura Rozen, and Colin Soloway, 'The Washington Monthly's Who's Who,' *The Washington Monthly*, December 2003; See also Rajiv Chandrasekaran, 'Ties to GOP Trumped Know-How Among Staff Sent to Rebuild Iraq,' *The Washington Post*, September 17, 2006.

<sup>93</sup> Rajiv Chandrasekaran, 'Ties to GOP Trumped Know-How Among Staff Sent to Rebuild Iraq.'

<sup>94</sup> Martin Bright, Ed Vulliamy, and Peter Beaumont, 'Revealed: US dirty tricks to win vote on Iraq war,' *The Observer*, March 2, 2003.



*York Times* did not give them much importance.<sup>95</sup> The inaction by domestic institutions which are meant to act as crucial checks to public policymaking was an important internal factor in the failure of U.S. coercive diplomacy. If these institutions had carried out their traditional roles, the inefficiencies in Washington's Iraq policies would have been detected at the appropriate time and might have been corrected.

## Implications:

### **How did internal factors in the U.S. as well as in Saddam's Iraq impact on the process of coercive diplomacy?**

Internal factors in both, the coercer and the target state, degraded decision-making structures, which then led to failure of the implicit coercion on Saddam's Iraq. Within the Bush administration, the faulty decision-making process helped decrease the chances for successful coercion. The significance of the use of Iraq as a test case for the Rumsfeld military transformation strategy was that it inflated Washington's already high objectives in its Iraq campaign. U.S. objectives in Iraq became part of the Pentagon's broader goal of military transformation. However, coercive diplomacy's chances of success rest mainly on limited, clear objectives, a characteristic that is more compatible with the Powell Doctrine.

Furthermore, in testing the new, agile military, the Pentagon sent in inadequate numbers of troops for the invasion and paid very little attention to the post-invasion scenario. In coercive diplomacy, when the threat finally has to be carried out, it has to demonstrate to the target (as well as any other potential adversaries) the punishment for not acceding to the coercer's demands. However, in this case, while the invasion and overthrow of Saddam Hussein was relatively quick,<sup>96</sup> the resulting post-war occupation of the country embroiled the U.S. military into an environment beset with sectarian violence and radical Islamic terrorism, which, by the middle of December 2006, had cost almost

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<sup>95</sup> Norman Solomon, 'NSA Spied on Diplomats in Push for Iraq War,' December 28, 2005, <http://www.antiwar.com/solomon/?articleid=8313>

<sup>96</sup> The invasion began on March 20, 2003, and Baghdad officially fell to coalition forces on April 9, 2003.

3,000 U.S. military deaths.<sup>97</sup> This ensured that the implementation of the U.S. threat was largely a failure (apart from the overthrow of Saddam).

This ineffective decision-making process also contributed to the failure of yet another U.S. goal – promoting democracy in the Middle East through Iraq. The violence and civil war-like conditions in the three years after the March 2003 invasion showed that Iraq had actually become a base of instability in the Middle East, rather than a democratic model for other states to follow. While it is true that sectarian violence, interference by neighboring states (such as Syria and Iran) and the influx of terrorist elements, have played major roles in fomenting Iraq's instability, it is reasonable to state that such a scenario should have been anticipated by the Bush administration. In fact, as this section earlier noted, war games in 1999 and prewar intelligence did predict such a scenario in which hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops would have been required. But this was disregarded by the critical decision-makers. Consequently, the high magnitude of objectives that the U.S. selected also led to a high magnitude of consequences that were rooted in inefficient and politicized decision-making.

But apart from domestic U.S. issues, the analysis of the Saddam regime's internal workings shows a dysfunctional policy-making structure in which there was an incorrect assessment of the priority of threats. What this suggests is that it is not just the coercer's objectives that are crucial to coercive diplomacy; it is also important to understand the target's set of objectives, which then guides the formulation of its interests, and subsequently determine the symmetry or asymmetry of motivation. In other words, hierarchy of objectives (or threats) is a crucial issue on both sides of the coercive equation. Thus, while Saddam feared threats to his regime, internal elements were a bigger worry than the U.S.

As stated in the section on threat credibility, while Saddam did recognize the military threat from the U.S., his calculation was that the U.S. was not interested in Type C coercion. Therefore, from Saddam's perspective, the image of war also was not a source of concern, because the bigger concern was the threat from other sources. Therefore, because Saddam did not adequately prioritize the threat from the U.S., the possibility of his

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<sup>97</sup> Figures from 'Iraq Coalition Casualties,' <http://www.icasualties.org/oif/> The U.S. military death toll till December 15, 2006 was 2,937.

conceding to U.S. demands also receded further. The following table summarizes the arguments in this section:

**Table 14: Iraq – Internal factors**

<b><u>Internal factors</u></b>	<b><u>Coercive diplomacy</u></b>
<u>Iraq</u> Saddam feared higher threat from internal elements	Diverted attention from actual magnitude of U.S threat. Downgraded U.S. threat. Therefore, possibility of conceding to U.S. demands diminished, contributing to failure of U.S. coercion.
<u>U.S.</u> Inefficient invasion and post-war planning Conflation of Iraq campaign with military transformation agenda	Failure of U.S. threat implementation Failure of U.S. goal of spreading democracy in the Middle East through Iraq.

## INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

For any coercive diplomatic activity to work, international endorsement can be crucial. Apart from political and moral legitimacy, multilateral support also adds to the coercive potential.<sup>98</sup> International support can also come in the form of financial and military support which can help make the coercer's threats more credible. Therefore, the case for coercion on the target state has to be made out by the coercer(s) in terms which signify an impending threat to the rest of the world or at the very least a regional threat. This helps assuage suspicions that the coercer is acting in its own narrow self-interests. So then the question arises – how to go about presenting an effective case to the international community? The crux of the argument would be irrefutable evidence that the target state has been involved in activity that is a threat to regional and international security. But as the objectives section shows, the U.S. was largely unable to convince the international community that military action against Iraq was essential for international security.

In this context, it is important to note the broader direction of American foreign policy which had increasingly become unilateral and after 9/11 was willing to push ahead with its agenda even if the international community did not fully support it. Therefore, a

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<sup>98</sup> Bruce W. Jentleson, 'The Reagan Administration Versus Nicaragua: The Limits of Type 'C' Coercive Diplomacy,' in Alexander L. George and William E. Simons, *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, pg. 178.

key variable favoring successful coercive diplomacy – international support – had been effectively downgraded by the U.S. Even if the international community did not overwhelmingly endorse U.S. policy toward Iraq, it would go ahead anyway.

The international community showed mixed support for U.S. policies against Iraq in the run-up to the war. The main ally in this endeavor was Britain, and to a lesser extent, assorted countries like Australia and Poland, and Spain. But other prominent NATO allies, especially France & Germany, came out strongly against the campaign. A key military ally, Turkey, declined to permit U.S. troops to enter Iraq through its territory. This forced some changes in the deployment schedule of the U.S. military forces headed to Iraq. This divide was also a reflection of the desire for the European Union to play a more assertive foreign and defense role, separate from the traditional alliance with the U.S.

However, while there was strong disagreement between the U.S. and Germany on the Iraq issue, documents released after the war stated that in February 2003 German intelligence had passed on to their American counterparts Saddam's military plan for defending the capital.<sup>99</sup> Other states such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia also provided secret military logistical assistance to U.S. forces. The fact that this collaboration (especially the German assistance) was not publicized before the war indicates that the Iraqi dictator's confidence in the international community continued to be maintained, and added to the dictator's resolve to resist.

On the other hand, from Saddam's perspective, support of the international community was a crucial element for decreasing the regime's sense of isolation. Saddam Hussein was convinced that the French and Russian governments would prevent the U.S. from launching an invasion of Iraq.<sup>100</sup> The reason for this confidence was that these two countries had considerable economic interests in Iraq and these profits were linked to their maintaining a pro-Baghdad position. Saddam had been able to distribute his largesse among them, because his regime could order humanitarian goods from any country it chose even though international commercial contracts were monitored by the UN Security

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<sup>99</sup> Michael R. Gordon, 'German Intelligence Gave U.S. Iraqi Defense Plan, Report Says.'

<sup>100</sup> *Iraqi Perspectives Project*, pg. 28.

Council resolution 668 committee.<sup>101</sup> Iraq's commercial dealings with these countries, as well others such as China, included commitments for lucrative deals in the oil field development sector, and this ensured that they (especially Russia) came out against stringent constraints on Iraq, such as no-fly zones. For example, this economic cooperation with Russia culminated in an August 2002 agreement between the two countries that amounted to about \$40 billion.<sup>102</sup> Baghdad also successfully threatened negative economic consequences against countries such as Poland after they had committed to siding with coalition forces before the invasion.<sup>103</sup>

This strategic economic relationship built up by Saddam's Iraq also extended to the sale of oil apart from UN approved shipments, which were ostensibly for humanitarian reasons. It built up a huge smuggling racket, which, by 2001 provided about \$1.5 billion to Saddam.<sup>104</sup> Furthermore, as the 2005 Volcker Committee report on corruption in the Oil for Food program revealed, in order to facilitate such illegal transactions, hundreds of influential politicians and government officials around the world were paid off. Thus, through its ability to distribute economic profits to countries and individuals, Baghdad was effectively able to buy their support.

Opposition from the general population in these countries (especially France and Germany) also impacted on their government's resistance to U.S. efforts against Iraq. Even after the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1441 in November 2002 (which the U.S. and U.K. used as justification for military action against Iraq) France and Germany tried to diplomatically block implementation of these threats.<sup>105</sup> The French government in fact wanted all sanctions lifted in order to protect commercial ties with Baghdad. Interestingly, several former Iron Curtain countries (such as the Czech Republic, Latvia, and Poland) came out in support of the U.S. However, the fact remains that the biggest diplomatic blow to U.S. efforts came from influential states that had previously been allied with the U.S. – France and Germany.<sup>106</sup> It is important to consider that from the coercive

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<sup>101</sup> Jerrold M. Post & Amatzia Baram, "'Saddam is Iraq: Iraq is Saddam' (Until Operation Iraqi Freedom)," pg. 200

<sup>102</sup> Post & Baram, "'Saddam is Iraq: Iraq is Saddam' (Until Operation Iraqi Freedom)," pg. 201.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, pp. 201-02.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, 203.

<sup>105</sup> John Keegan, *The Iraq War*, (New York, NY: Alfred a. Knopf, 2004), pp. 104-107.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, pg. 108.

diplomacy perspective, the very public opposition from European states bolstered Saddam Hussein, even though, as is noted elsewhere in this section, there was some covert German intelligence assistance to the U.S. in the weeks before the invasion.

But Baghdad did not just benefit from political support. The Iraqi Perspectives Project revealed that as U.S. troops moved to capture Baghdad, Saddam's regime received detailed intelligence on U.S. troop movements from Russian diplomats in Iraq. Among other reports, Russian officials correctly informed the regime that U.S. forces were bypassing Iraqi cities to launch an offensive on Baghdad.<sup>107</sup> According to other sources this was part of a pattern of Russian assistance through retired military personnel and serving diplomats and intelligence agents in Iraq, including the Russian ambassador in Iraq, Vladimir Titorenko, as well as the former head of the Soviet airborne forces, Gen. Vladislav Achalov, who visited Baghdad just prior to the invasion.<sup>108</sup>

Before and after the invasion, Russian military intelligence (GRU) officials as well as other retired military officials such as the former deputy commander of Soviet air defense, Col. Gen. Igor Maltsev, admitted that they advised Baghdad on improving their air defenses.<sup>109</sup> Titorenko is suspected of having provided information on U.S. war plans and could have been involved in this activity for financial reasons, given that the Volcker commission's investigation into corruption in the UN oil for food program indicted the ambassador and his son, among many other senior Russian government figures and politicians.<sup>110</sup> Nevertheless, it is considered unlikely that this collaboration in the run up to the war was approved at the highest levels of the Putin government.

Several pieces of intelligence that were passed were extremely flawed, and considering that the U.S. Central Command was aware of the Russian-Iraqi collaboration, it is likely that at least some element of this was part of a disinformation campaign by the U.S. military. However, this issue has to be seen from the Saddam regime's perspective. In the face of increasing U.S. pressure and the inevitability of an invasion, such foreign

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<sup>107</sup> Ann Scott Tyson & Josh White, 'Russians Helped Iraq, Study Says,' *The Washington Post*, March 25, 2006.

<sup>108</sup> Mark Kramer, 'Did Russia Help Saddam During the War,' *The Washington Post*, April 2, 2006.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, and Kim Murphy, 'Russia Denies Slipping U.S. War Plans to Iraq,' *The Los Angeles Times*, March 26, 2006.

<sup>110</sup> Mark Kramer, 'Did Russia Help Saddam During the War.'

support in the form of valuable military intelligence would have lessened the sense of siege in the regime.

### Post-invasion period

The implementation of U.S. threats eventually involved post-invasion stabilization, a task for which the U.S. military as well as the Coalition Provisional authority were ill-equipped. The resulting instability flared up in the form of sectarian violence (Shia Vs. Sunni) that was also directed at U.S.-led coalition forces. Here, external actors, such as Iran and Syria were prominently involved, through their support for various militia.

Elements of the clerical regime in Iran supported Shia militia operating in Iraq while Syria is alleged to have provided sanctuary to Sunni Arab militants as well as former members of the Iraqi Ba'ath Party.<sup>111</sup> Additionally the Lebanese Hezbollah was also involved in training the Mahdi Army of Moktada Al-Sadr.<sup>112</sup> Both Iran and Syria have strategic reason for backing such groups, stemming from a need to expand their area of influence in the Middle East and to counter any U.S. political/military strategies against them. Thus, Iran and Syria are among the external actors that have played the role of 'spoilers' in the post-invasion U.S. plans in Iraq.

### Implications:

#### **How did various actors in the international strategic environment impact on CD?**

In this case, various external actors played spoilers or were expected to do so (by the Saddam regime). Consequently, they provided implicit reassurances to Saddam that his regime would be protected from U.S. invasion. These major powers, in their role as spoilers helped increase the Saddam regime's strength of motivation. Combined with his view that the U.S. would not send in an invasion army to take Baghdad, Saddam therefore downgraded the threat to his regime from the U.S. He was confident that the international

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<sup>111</sup> 'Syria, Iran will help U.S. – for favors,' MSNBC, December 6, 2006, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/16077667/>

<sup>112</sup> Jonathan Karl & Martin Clancy, 'Iranian Weapons Arm Iraqi Militia,' ABC News, November 30, 2006, <http://abcnews.go.com/International/print?id=2688501>

community, especially France and Russia, would come to Iraq's assistance by preventing U.S. action. Therefore, the effect of coercion on Saddam by U.S. military moves did not occur.

On the other hand, after the invasion, countries such as Iran and Syria, in an attempt to counter U.S. presence, as well as to prevent Iraq from becoming a hostile power once again, increased their influence in the country through proxies. The high number of spoilers present in this case is a reflection of the extremely broad and numerous objectives formulated by the U.S. It is therefore natural that the greater the coercer's objectives, the greater the number of actors that could potentially be affected (positively or negatively) by the consequences of coercion. In this case, even though countries such as France and Germany were not directly affected by U.S. action against Iraq, they feared the broader regional and geopolitical shifts that would result from the expansion of the U.S. presence in the Middle East. Therefore, for the coercer, it is not just the strength of motivation of the target state that is important. In cases where third party involvement is likely, the interests and strength of motivation of these potential spoilers is also a crucial calculation for the coercer.

Various other components of coercive diplomacy acted against the coercer (the U.S.). An important contextual variable – isolation of the adversary – did not take place since France, Russia and some other important states, especially Germany, did not side with the U.S. and in fact worked to thwart its plans.

For the same reason, there was no international support (whether through military or financial assistance) which would have helped make U.S. threats more credible. Another contextual variable is unilateral/coalitional coercion, which essentially states that a unilateral exercise can be more effective because it is easier to maintain unity and a clear sense of purpose.<sup>113</sup> In this case, apart from Britain, Washington did not have any major allies, but the large ground force that would have made the threat more credible, was missing. This ground force could have conceivably come from states such as France and Russia, but instead they opposed U.S. plans. Therefore, while unilateral coercive diplomacy by the U.S. gave the exercise a sense of purpose, because of Saddam's

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<sup>113</sup> George and Smoke, 'Findings and Conclusions,' pg. 273.



assumption that other major powers would counter this determination it adversely affected coercive diplomacy.

The following table briefly summarizes the arguments in this section:

**Table 15: Iraq – International Strategic Environment**

<b><u>International Strategic Environment</u></b>		<b>Isolation of adversary (Iraq)</b>	<b>International support (to U.S.)</b>	<b>Unilateral/Coalitional coercion</b>
Arguments	French and German trade ties a motive for them to prevent U.S. from attacking.	Not possible Lessened Saddam's sense of isolation	Not enough support.	No (though the UK was part of the coalition, it was largely driven by the U.S.)
	Covert Russian intelligence and military assistance			

## CONCLUSION

This case has showed the limitations of Type 'C' coercive diplomacy, especially the extreme variant where nothing short of the overthrow of the target regime is sought. The U.S. objective of regime change drastically increased the magnitude of demands which also made it difficult to make a plausible case for support to the international community.

But a bigger issue was that Saddam Hussein refused to take seriously the threat of a ground invasion (which would have resulted in a regime change) for three main reasons. First, that the U.S. did not have the 'stomach' for an invasion. Second, Saddam was diverted by other perceived threats and third, he assumed that influential states, especially France and Russia, would prevent Washington from going ahead with the invasion.

Therefore, in this particular case, the role of spoilers was extremely relevant, but in a slightly different manner than usual. Here, the target expected certain third parties to act as spoilers in the coercive process; however, they were ineffective. In fact, one expected spoiler (Germany) was also surreptitiously assisting the coercer (U.S.) while maintaining public opposition to the coercive process. Here it is important to mention the importance of reputations. Part of the reason why the spoiler assisted the coercer might have been due to the reputation of the coercer. However, the spoiler's own need to maintain its own

reputation of independence then helps explain why Germany maintained public support for Iraq.

A secondary element is the possible use of spoilers by the coercer to feed disinformation in the target state. This is suspected to have been deployed by the U.S. through its use of connections between some Russian military officials and Saddam regime. What this suggests is that such entities (spoilers) need not always be a negative element for the coercer. It all depends on how the coercer views the particular spoiler.

The U.S. had hoped that its campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq would provide an appropriate measure of its power to other potential adversaries, such as Iran, North Korea, and Syria. But this demonstration effect<sup>114</sup> backfired as it got bogged down in Iraq in the midst of a raging insurgency. Therefore, its threats to other states carry less potency, given that its military might is compromised in other places. This case study therefore highlights the effect of adequate demonstration effects when pursuing coercive diplomacy, especially when it comes to convincing a potential adversary of the credibility of its military threats. Saddam did not perceive past U.S. actions as a threat because he felt that the pattern of U.S. actions elsewhere did not suggest it could use more forceful measures against Iraq. Therefore, for policymakers the question then becomes – how to demonstrate to a potential adversary the efficacy of its threats through present actions elsewhere?

A further question is – can Type ‘C’ coercive diplomacy be applied in these cases? At the outset, the very notion that regime change is the objective tilts the asymmetry of motivation in favor of the target state because it has a lot more at stake, which then makes it more determined to resist and resort to brinkmanship. It also depends on how credible threats are. At a time when U.S. forces are stretched across the globe this would not be very easy. The fact that the target states might possess varying stocks of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons would be an added consideration. The global strategic environment is another crucial factor to be considered here. Major powers such as Russia and China would be influential in any future type ‘C’ activity, especially given their close ties to Iran and North Korea. But these very links also provide them with motivation to resist U.S. pressures on their allies, whether due to commercial or strategic reasons.

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<sup>114</sup> Daniel Benjamin, ‘Made in the USA,’ *Slate*, July 26, 2006.

An additional problem this case raises is that the misuse of intelligence in order to carry out a military attack has far reaching implications on strategies elsewhere. It lessens the sense of trust in crucial intelligence analyses dealing with compelling issues such as the Iranian and North Korean nuclear programs and other crises that might emerge in the future. Coercive policies require strong domestic leadership as well as clarity of objectives, especially when threats have to be backed up with military action which involves loss of lives. In the U.S., with its strong division of powers and constitutional oversight, past records of intelligence manipulation makes it more difficult for the executive effectively to make the case for future action elsewhere. This naturally detracts from the credibility of threats and lessens the sense of isolation in the adversary.

But on the other hand, such a cautionary example (i.e., the Iraq case) also encourages policymakers and intelligence analysts to examine the actual capabilities (rather than just the intentions) of other targets more carefully. Therefore, in the Iranian case, while official reports still cannot say for sure what its actual capability is, estimates of the likely period of time it would take to construct a nuclear device have been revised and suggest a longer breathing space.

Such cases also give rise to debates within policymaking circles on whether alternative strategies (other than coercion and military attacks), such as deterrence and containment can be considered, especially if their cost, in terms of human lives and financial resources, is much lower. It is thus clear that coercive process across the board have to be seen as a continuum of foreign policymaking across regions, much as was the case during the Cold War.

<b>Factors affecting coercive diplomacy</b>	<b>Consequence</b>
<b>Objectives</b> Broad multiple objectives Regime change because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- WMD</li> <li>- Terrorism</li> <li>- Democracy</li> </ul>	Prevented clarity of objectives, high magnitude of demands. Detracted from international support.
<b>Perceptions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Saddam had a defective priority order of threats</li> <li>- Israel given priority in threat perceptions</li> </ul>	Image of war from U.S. did not deter Saddam
<b>Credibility of U.S. threats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Saddam did not take threat of ground invasion seriously</li> <li>- Confident U.S. would be content with occupying territory short of regime change</li> <li>- Confident Republican Guard and Fedayeen would stop U.S. forces from regime change objective</li> </ul>	Threat of unacceptable escalation not an issue for Saddam. Did not believe the U.S. would escalate to unacceptable levels. Unacceptable escalation = ground war, leading to regime change.
<b>Internal factors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More concerned with coup/rebellion</li> <li>- Defective decision-making in US</li> </ul>	Image of war (for Saddam) defective. Image of war was threatening from the wrong source.  Led to failure of post-war occupation
<b>International Strategic Environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support from France and Russia, based on their commercial interests.</li> <li>- Russian military collaboration</li> </ul>	International support not in favor of U.S. Saddam assumed U.S. would be prevented from launching ground invasion.

**Table 16: Iraq – Summary of Arguments**

## **5.0 COERCIVE DIPLOMACY AND THE NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR CRISIS 2002-06**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Since the 1950-53 Korean War, North Korea-U.S. relations have gone through several crisis situations. The latest one began in October 2002 after Pyongyang's secret uranium-enrichment program was revealed. The U.S. firmly maintained throughout that North Korea (Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea – DPRK) should not be allowed to possess nuclear weapons, something that was rejected by the Kim Jong Il regime. This animosity has to be understood in the context of the Korean War which essentially ended in a stalemate without a peace treaty.

This crisis featured four years of coercive threats by Pyongyang in pursuit of certain demands. This is an interesting case in which Washington also countered with coercion which helped cement North Korea's perception that the U.S. was intent on bringing about regime change in Pyongyang. Pyongyang's demands essentially centered on getting adequate reassurances from Washington that the Kim Jong Il regime would not be destabilized. However in the absence of any such reassurances from the U.S., North Korea maintained its coercive stance through threats that included missiles tests and the eventual nuclear test in October 2006.

During the crisis, the U.S. also put pressure through several mechanisms, such as the Six Party Talks (U.S., North Korea, China, South Korea, Japan, and Russia). However, Pyongyang rebuffed these attempts at coercion and in return ratcheted up its own coercive diplomacy. This chapter argues that North Korea's coercive diplomacy was partially successful because it succeeded in extracting several concessions from Six Party allies other than the U.S. It also managed to demonstrate its nuclear capability, which was not just a way of demonstrating threat credibility but also an end in itself. On the other hand,

U.S. coercive activity was completely unsuccessful, because it failed to prevent nuclearization of North Korea and also did not succeed in the implicit regime change goal. This outcome can be explained through the use of the five factors that provide the framework for this dissertation: objectives, perceptions, credibility of threats, internal factors, and international strategic environment.

## Archetype

This case study is an example of coercion directed at the U.S. from a ‘rogue’ regime. It is also a case of the U.S. attempting multilateral coercion against a nuclear armed adversary. The U.S. has attempted to stem the spread of WMD acquisition world wide in recent years, against countries such as Iraq, Iran, North Korea, and Libya. Counter-proliferation through coercive means is one of the approaches used by the U.S. over the years. Interestingly, the most recent case of nuclear rollback, that of Libya, involved mainly discussions with the Gaddafi regime and began after Tripoli indicated that it wanted to remove its pariah status. However, Washington did not apply lessons from the Libya case and refused any concessions or bilateral talks with Pyongyang.

More crucially, this is a relevant case of coercive diplomacy by a suspected nuclear state directed toward the U.S., which in fact, has played the role of ‘coercer’ in several instances of coercion over the decades. With WMD acquisition increasingly becoming an attractive approach for countries such as Iran, coercion against the U.S. is quite possible in future conflict situations. An crucial point to note here is that since this is a case where both North Korea and the U.S. tried to coerce each other, both entities are periodically referred to as ‘target’ and ‘coercer’ according to the argument being presented.

## Chronology

In late 2002, Pyongyang accepted that it had a uranium-enrichment program, which was in violation of both the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and its 1994 Agreed Framework

deal with the United States.<sup>1</sup> Its actions could be seen as scaling the ladder of escalation. After its admission of the uranium enrichment plant, North Korea announced that it would restart plutonium production, and expel inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency. Then in January 2003, North Korea withdrew from the NPT. The general agreement among experts has been that Pyongyang is capable of producing nuclear weapons,<sup>2</sup> and the October 2006 test confirmed this suspicion. Delivery vehicles, in this case, missiles, are also either in place or in various stages of production.<sup>3</sup> These missiles have the capability to strike North Korea's regional opponents – South Korea and Japan. Also crucial is North Korea's role as a proliferator. The danger of it selling nuclear and missile technology in exchange for hard cash is ever present.

The 1994 Agreed Framework with the Clinton administration had cooled tensions after war almost broke out on the peninsula. In return for fuel, food, and a light water reactor, North Korea agreed to desist from taking steps to acquire a nuclear arsenal.<sup>4</sup> The agreement was unable to prevent North Korea from reprocessing 8,000 spent fuel rods at its plutonium generator at Yongbyon. This is adequate for building up to six nuclear weapons.<sup>5</sup> At present, it would be safe to say that Pyongyang has completed the nuclear fuel cycle and has developed nuclear weapons capability.<sup>6</sup>

## PERCEPTIONS

The basis for North Korea's coercive demands and high objectives was a deep perception of threat from the U.S. The Kim Jong Il regime assumed that if North Korea did not take

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<sup>1</sup> Ivo Daalder and J.H. Lindsay, 'Why the U.S. Is Focusing On Iraq: Can U.S. Engage Pyongyang Without Rewarding It?' *San Jose Mercury News*, January 5, 2003,

<http://www.brookings.edu/views/op-ed/daalder/20030105.htm>

<sup>2</sup> 'North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Program,' January 23, 2003, Center for Defense Information, Fact Sheet,

<http://www.cdi.org/nuclear/nk-fact-sheet-pr.cfm>

<sup>3</sup> 'Worldwide Ballistic Missile Inventories,' Arms Control Association, Fact Sheets, May 2002,

<http://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/missiles.asp>

<sup>4</sup> Michael O'Hanlon and M. Mochizuki, 'Toward a Grand Bargain with North Korea,' *The Washington Quarterly*, Autumn 2003, pg. 8.

<sup>5</sup> 'N Korean 'offer' on nuclear talks,' BBC News February 23, 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/3512819.stm>

<sup>6</sup> North Korea: Nuclear Weapons Program, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/dprk/nuke.htm>

measures to bolster its deterrent capability, the U.S. would successfully coerce regime change. Therefore, for North Korea the fear was impending regime change Type C coercive diplomacy by the U.S. and this reinforced Pyongyang's own coercive threats to achieve demands that would have blunted Washington's supposed regime change objective.

Thus, North Korea consistently suspected that Washington's actual intentions revolved around regime change in the country. To a large extent, influential sections of the American foreign policy establishment backed such an objective. Though officially regime change was not on the Bush administration's agenda, sections of the administration were involved in planning for this eventuality.<sup>7</sup> The problem was that regime *survival* was the main objective of Pyongyang. Kim Jong Il's regime learnt a lesson from the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in 2003, and saw its own confrontation in the same context. A September 2006 statement by the Rodong Sinmun, the Communist Party's official newspaper said, "In order for any country to defend itself it is important to have a correct view on war, among other things. This can be proved by what happened in Iraq," adding that a state "can reliably defend itself only when it manufactures necessary weapons by itself."<sup>8</sup>

Pyongyang's perceptions of U.S. regime change agenda were not quelled by President Bush's personal animosity toward the North Korean dictator. In an interview he stated that, "I loathe Kim Jong Il. I've got a visceral reaction to this guy, because he is starving his people. And I have seen intelligence of these prison camps – they're huge – that he uses to break up families, and to torture people."<sup>9</sup> For North Korea such opinions were unacceptable. In 2004, DPRK's vice foreign minister Kim Gye Gwan asked a visiting American scholar, "How can we deal with you when your leader doesn't show us even a minimum of respect?"<sup>10</sup>

With such an overall attitude, it is unclear if the Bush administration would have been satisfied even if North Korea had agreed to a complete rollback. North Korea had already been placed on the 'axis of evil' list even before the October 2002 revelations.

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<sup>7</sup> David Rennie, 'Rumsfeld Calls for Regime Change in North Korea,' *The Telegraph*, April 23, 2003.

<sup>8</sup> 'North Korea Cites Iraq, Lebanon to Justify Strong Military,' *DefenseNews.com*, September 6, 2006.

<sup>9</sup> Bob Woodward, *Bush at War*, (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2002), pg. 340.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Hirsh, Melinda Liu & George Wehrfritz, 'How N. Korea Changed the Nuclear Club's Rules,' *Newsweek*, October 23, 2006.



After the March 2003 invasion of Iraq, the administration reinforced the argument for spread of democracy and human rights to other countries with authoritarian regimes. Therefore, with this kind of perceived regime change agenda, Kim Jong Il's motivation to resist such pressures through counter-threats increased.

Due to this regime insecurity, Pyongyang consistently demanded bilateral negotiations with Washington involving security guarantees and full diplomatic relations. Kim Jong Il's view was that only such a direct deal with the U.S. could provide real security to the regime.<sup>11</sup> This was because the main conceivable military threat to North Korea comes from the U.S. However, as stated in the previous section, the U.S. was not willing to offer any such guarantees or even bilateral talks, because this was an integral part of applying a strong coercive policy.

Further, while the Bush administration demanded complete and verifiable denuclearization of North Korea, there was no clarity of settlement conditions. If the target is assured by the coercer that after it (the target) concedes it would be treated in acceptable ways, and an appropriate agreement would be adhered to, the chances of successful coercive diplomacy greatly increase. However, in this case, the Bush administration, chastened by North Korea's surreptitious nuclear program after the 1994 deal, refused to discuss any issues related to concessions to Pyongyang till it completely and verifiably dismantled its nuclear weapons program. Such issues would have revolved around a formal peace treaty between North Korea and the U.S. as well as security guarantees which might have included a no-war pact. However, there was no room for any discussion on the post-denuclearization period, and this left little clarity regarding the future of the regime.

Perception issues also arose due to differing understandings on each side on the meaning of denuclearization. For North Korea, denuclearization had a broader connotation and involved making the entire Korean peninsula nuclear-weapon free; however, the U.S. denied deploying nuclear weapons in South Korea.<sup>12</sup> North Korea also perceived U.S. assistance to refugees from the country as signifying a regime change objective. This was Pyongyang's likely conclusion after President Bush signed the North Korean Human

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<sup>11</sup> Chung-in Moon and Jong-Yun Bae, 'The Bush Doctrine and the North Korean Nuclear Crisis,' *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 27, No. 4, 2003, pg. 15.

<sup>12</sup> Jim Yardley, 'North Korea Seeks U.S. Aid Before It Halts Its Nuclear Program,' *The New York Times*, July 28, 2005.

Rights Act which granted an annual sum of \$20 million to assist refugees from North Korea.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, North Korea's *motivation* to resist arose because of its perception that Washington's objectives were not restricted to a roll back of the nuclear arsenal, but in fact included an overthrow of the regime and possible reunification with the South. If Pyongyang had agreed to rollback its nuclear arsenal in the absence of adequate security reassurances, it would then have been easier for the U.S. to go ahead with forcible regime change.

The regime change agenda went beyond the fundamental interests of the U.S., and so it was difficult to attain, making the resolve of Pyongyang stronger, and the credibility of American threats weaker. Asymmetry of interests is a very important concept here. If the U.S. had restricted its demands in both cases to the nuclear issue, then coercion would have had a better chance of succeeding. But the way the discourse has been played out, there was now an inseparable linkage between nuclear weapons and regime change. This is why Pyongyang insisted on security guarantees and written pledges that it would not be attacked – because it was convinced that any negative action against it had the larger motive of regime change. This naturally gave rise to suspicions in Washington that any talks that North Korea engaged in or any supposed concessions that it offered would solely be for the purpose of extracting aid and securing the regime and would not involve any actual dismantling of its nuclear program.

Coercive measures to deal with counter-proliferation in this case depended on whether the overall strategy is one of regime change or behavior change.<sup>14</sup> In a regime change strategy, conditionalities of any deal would be extreme enough to force the target into a belligerent posture, which could then be used to justify more direct regime change measures. But a strategy that concentrates on behavior change rather than regime change could be more reasonable without being unnecessarily concessionary. However, this difference was never specified by the Bush administration. Therefore, the uncertainty regarding the regime change agenda remained and allowed to North Korean regime to take a pessimistic view of the situation.

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<sup>13</sup> Anne Wu, 'What China Whispers to North Korea,' *The Washington Quarterly*, Spring 2005, pg. 37.

<sup>14</sup> The term behavior change in this context is derived from George Perkovich & S. Manzanero, 'Plan B: Using Sanctions to End Iran's Nuclear Program,' *Arms Control Today*, May 2004 and R. Wright & D. McManus, 'Divisions on Iran rattle Bush team,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, May 31, 2003.

Nevertheless, the spread of nuclear weapons is one of the most crucial international security problems, and regime change was a prominent option considered in case of North Korea. If a firm decision on regime change is taken in any situation, a key question to be asked is – who is conducting this change.<sup>15</sup> A multilateralist approach would bring in much needed international acceptance, and provide credibility to threats. But this was hardly the case here.

## Implications:

### **How did perceptions impact on coercive diplomacy?**

The recurring theme of this dissertation is the importance of perceptions on the opposing sides and how it framed their respective positions and demands. In North Korea's perceptions, the U.S. was aiming at eventual regime change in Pyongyang through multilateral isolation and refusal to negotiate bilaterally. Washington did not try to change these threat perceptions by denying such an agenda or through a reassurance strategy. Indeed, for some influential policymakers in Washington, regime change was the answer to dealing with the threat from North Korea, and therefore, Pyongyang's threat perceptions were not entirely inaccurate. As the section on internal factors demonstrates, the Bush administration's first term was dominated by neo-conservative officials who had recommended strong action against 'rogue' states such as North Korea, Iran, and Iraq throughout the Clinton years.

Armed with a high degree of threat perception centered around regime change, Pyongyang therefore made high coercive demands that impacted on national security interests defined by the Bush administration. The national interests were enshrined in documents such as the 2002 National Security Strategy and were linked to sweeping references such as the 'Axis of Evil,' and North Korea's membership of this group. The administration had firmly committed itself to a policy under which bilateral talks about security guarantees would only follow complete, verifiable, irreversible disarmament (CVID). Thus high threat perception led Pyongyang to put forth a high magnitude of demands that balanced the asymmetry of interests, essentially leading to a stalemate.

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<sup>15</sup> Pascal Boniface, 'What Justifies Regime Change,' *The Washington Quarterly*, Summer 2003, pg. 70.

Thus, perceptions of mutual distrust ensured that the interests remained high and symmetrical on both sides, reducing the chances of success of coercive diplomacy. This was not necessarily because fundamental interests of both sides were at stake. It was more to do with the fact that perceptions of suspicion had ensured that any agreement would have required a high degree of reassurance that each side would have had to offer to the other. Thus, the U.S. wanted complete CVID as a reassurance against any deal breaking by Pyongyang, while North Korea wanted credible security guarantees against possible Type C coercive diplomacy by Washington. Therefore, as the next section shows, both sides framed objectives that were wide-ranging and in the U.S. case at least, immune to any modification.

**Table 17: North Korean case: Perceptions**

<b><u>Perceptions</u></b>	<b>Coercive Diplomacy consequence</b>
North Korean perceptions that real U.S. objective is regime change.	Therefore, its demand for direct bilateral talks with U.S. over security guarantees, as it perceived the U.S. to be the main threat.
U.S. perceptions of mistrust based on North Korea's cheating in the past.	Refusal to give any security assurances, increased the fear of Type C CD in Pyongyang's perception, leading to high demands and symmetry of motivation, resulting in a stalemate.

## OBJECTIVES

The magnitude of objectives and demands of the coercer as well as the target help determine the eventual course of coercive diplomacy. If the coercer issues demands that go against the vital interests of the adversary, then the asymmetry of interests favors the adversary, making it more likely to resist.<sup>16</sup> In this case, both U.S. and North Korea had certain irreducible objectives, because of which they stuck to their stated positions.

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<sup>16</sup> Alexander L. George, 'Coercive Diplomacy: Definition and Characteristics,' in Alexander L. George and William E. Simons, (ed) *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, (Boulder, CO, Westview Press, 1994), pg. 15.

## North Korean coercive objectives and demands

Pyongyang's coercive moves came about in its pursuit of certain goals that would have helped secure its regime, especially in context of the threat perception from the U.S. North Korea's coercive responses to U.S. pressure involved 'brinkmanship diplomacy' where it raises the stakes to procure increased economic aid, which would then help in shoring up the regime.<sup>17</sup>

For Pyongyang, its nuclear weapons program was both a method of extracting more demands as well as an end in itself (for deterrent purposes). The objectives underlying North Korea's nuclear program can be summarized as follows. First, nuclear weapons are supposed to help deter a military attack by the U.S. and/or Republic of Korea (South Korea), whether it is a general invasion or a limited attack on North Korean nuclear and missile facilities. Second, the deterrent effect of nuclear weapons would help North Korea in the eventual reunification of the peninsula on *its* terms.<sup>18</sup> Third, nuclear weapons have become a tool for Pyongyang to extract aid, in terms of food, fuel, and cash.<sup>19</sup> Its demands also include a non-aggression pact with the United States to officially end the 1950-53 Korean War. A further danger is that besides its missile deliveries to countries like Pakistan, it could soon start exporting weapons grade plutonium,<sup>20</sup> or even transfer nuclear materials to terrorist groups.

While the U.S. preferred multilateral coercion, North Korea demanded direct bilateral talks with the U.S., which the latter felt would be too much of a concession to Pyongyang. In the first two rounds of the recent six-party talks, Pyongyang proposed a three step agenda as its immediate objectives. These were (1) North Korea be excluded from Washington's list of state sponsors of terrorism, (2) end of all sanctions, and (3) the supply of heavy fuel oil.<sup>21</sup> These immediate and general objectives (security guarantee for the Korean peninsula and a non-aggression pact with the U.S.) are indicators that for

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<sup>17</sup> J.H. Lee and C.I. Moon, 'The North Korean Nuclear Crisis Revisited: The Case for a Negotiated Settlement,' *Security Dialogue*, June 2003, Vol. 34, No. 2.

<sup>18</sup> J.S. Bermudez, Jr., 'The Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Unconventional Weapons,' pg. 183.

<sup>19</sup> 'Analysis: North Korean Nuclear Blackmail?' United Press International, June 11, 2003

<sup>20</sup> Michael A. Levi, 'Uncontainable: North Korea's Loose Nukes,' *The New Republic*, May 26, 2003.

<sup>21</sup> B.B. Koh, 'Kim Jong Il's April 2004 Visit to China,' Policy Forum Online, The Nautilus Institute, May 7, 2004.

Pyongyang the main objective has been the survival of the regime and any demands that threaten this would be turned down.

North Korea's approach included an insistence that it could not dismantle nuclear weapons as well as a threat to demonstrate or even transfer these devices.<sup>22</sup> This implied a threat to destabilize the region with a nuclear test. But it also represented an attempt to exploit U.S. insecurity regarding terrorism in the post 9/11 period. The threat to transfer nuclear material clearly referred to terror groups, especially Al Qaeda, which had expressed an interest in non-conventional weapons. Given these worries in the U.S., such a threat was bound to be taken seriously.<sup>23</sup>

North Korea also stated that if the U.S. and the UN decided to impose economic sanctions, this would be regarded as an act of war and that Pyongyang would retaliate by leaving the U.S. in a 'sea of fire.'<sup>24</sup> While the U.S. attempted multilateral pressure, it is also clear that the characteristics of nuclear weapons (especially the deterrence capability) also enable coercion in the other direction, i.e., by the target state on to the coercer.<sup>25</sup> Given the internal conditions in the country, Pyongyang had much less to lose than members of the U.S. alliance in the region (South Korea and Japan). Furthermore, large numbers of American troops stationed in South Korea and Japan would have been an obvious target of North Korean coercion. Therefore, this brings about fundamental changes in the way coercion can be applied in a context of nuclear weapons.

Another way for North Korea to issue counter-threats was through periodic missile tests. North Korea has a history of testing missiles in an attempt to gain the international community's attention. Periodically, since the crisis began in 2002, intelligence reports suggested that the regime was on the verge of testing missiles in the Sea of Japan.<sup>26</sup> Despite a September 2002 agreement between Japan and North Korea under which the

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<sup>22</sup> James A. Kelly, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Prepared Statement, U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, July 15, 2004, pg. 4, [http://www.nautilus.org/DPRKBriefingBook/multilateralTalks/CanKor\\_VTK\\_2004\\_07\\_15\\_six\\_party\\_talks\\_kelly\\_testimony.pdf](http://www.nautilus.org/DPRKBriefingBook/multilateralTalks/CanKor_VTK_2004_07_15_six_party_talks_kelly_testimony.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> See for example, Graham Allison, 'The ongoing failure of imagination,' *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, September/October 2006, Vol. 62, No. 5, pp. 36-41.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Klare, 'For Oil and Empire? Rethinking War with Iraq,' *Current History*, March 2003.

<sup>25</sup> William M. Drennan, "Nuclear Weapons and North Korea: Who's Coercing Whom?" in Robert J. Art & Patrick M. Cronin (ed.) *The United States and Coercive Diplomacy*, (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2003)

<sup>26</sup> Andrew Salmon, 'Japan alert for N. Korean rocket test,' *International Herald Tribune*, Sept. 23, 2004.

North agreed not to test missiles, it tested shorter-range anti ship missiles in 2003. There were also reports in 2004 that North Korea was planning to test its Nodong missiles that can cover most of Japan, which had thousands of American troops stationed there.<sup>27</sup>

Apart from U.S. and South Korean forces, North Korea's threats also targeted other countries in the region. The U.S. nuclear umbrella has ensured that Japan and South Korea did not pursue a nuclear weapons program and instead concentrated on economic progress. All that would have changed if Pyongyang had fired another missile over the Sea of Japan. As it is, there has been growing domestic support in Japan for a nuclear deterrent.<sup>28</sup> Japan is a key player in the long-term perspective that takes into account the possible reunification of the Korean peninsula and the implications for East Asian security.

North Korea offered some concessions along with its threats as was the case during the October 2002 talks, but neither of them met the minimum U.S. demands. In negotiations it considered proposals to eventually dismantle its nuclear weapons program, but the initial steps would only involve freezing it,<sup>29</sup> which was unacceptable because it still left it the option of restarting the program at any future date, or even using it as a threat to the international community. But what does seem clear is that part of its agenda for negotiations was to extract as many concessions as possible for the slightest positive moves. Even for a partial freeze for its nuclear program, Pyongyang sought compensation, while Washington wanted to end the program completely.<sup>30</sup> When its enriched uranium project was revealed, Pyongyang immediately offered to halt it in return for a non-aggression pact with the United States.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, with this kind of track record, it was difficult for the U.S. to consider the limited concessions offered by Pyongyang.

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<sup>27</sup> As of 2006, 47,000 U.S. military personnel are stationed in Japan, about half of them in Okinawa, see 'Cost split stalls talks on US troops in Japan,' *ChinaDaily.com*, March 25, 2006, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2006-03/25/content\\_552249.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2006-03/25/content_552249.htm) and 'United States Forces Japan,' [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_States\\_Forces\\_Japan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Forces_Japan)

<sup>28</sup> Ivo H. Daalder and James Lindsay, 'Nuclear Wal-Mart?' *The American Prospect*, September 1, 2003.

<sup>29</sup> Leon Sigal, 'Negotiating with the North,' *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, November/December 2003.

<sup>30</sup> 'North Korea nuclear talks begin,' BBC News, May 4, 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/asia-pacific/3706103.stm>

<sup>31</sup> J.T. Laney and J.T. Shaplen, 'How to Deal With North Korea,' *Foreign Affairs*, March-April 2003.

## Washington's refusal to concede to North Korean demands

From the Bush administration's perspective, the magnitude of North Korean demands was simply too high because it could have recreated the danger of Pyongyang cheating once again. The U.S. refused to give in to any of Pyongyang's demands because doing so would have compromised its objectives on the Korean peninsula. The most urgent of these was halting and possibly reversing Pyongyang's nuclear and missile program. Avoiding war on the peninsula between the two Koreas (which would most certainly draw in the U.S.) has been another goal. Washington has also sought to curtail North Korea's role as a distributor of missile and potentially, nuclear material and know-how. Also important was a major reduction in the conventional military capability of North Korea. At the heart of any U.S. approach to North Korea was the fundamental principle that Pyongyang had to give up nuclear weaponization first and only subsequent to that could any talks be held on security agreements and other long term deals.

While the Bush administration had a clear unilateral approach to foreign policy, (judging by the Afghanistan and Iraq campaigns), on the North Korean issue it preferred a multilateral approach, albeit one still involving coercion. Washington's multilateral approach aimed to pressurize Pyongyang by getting other regional powers, especially China, Japan, and South Korea to persuade the regime.<sup>32</sup> Through this multilateral approach, Washington avoided making any direct concessions to North Korea, given that one of Pyongyang's key demands has been direct bilateral talks with the U.S.

Washington's threats included suspension of the 1994 Agreed Framework and an end to economic assistance. The U.S. forced the Korean Energy Development Organization (KEDO) to halt shipment of heavy oil to Pyongyang. Hard-line proponents of American strategy recommended strong measures such as demanding that Pyongyang surrender its entire nuclear capability, shut down its missile bases, and submit to a full and complete inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).<sup>33</sup>

In February 2003, as tensions increased, President Bush stated that 'all options are on the table,' indicating that military options had not been discounted. At the same time,

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<sup>32</sup> Robert Jervis, *American Foreign Policy in a New Era*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005), pg. 87.

<sup>33</sup> David Frum and Richard Perle, *An End to Evil: How to Win the War on Terror*, (New York, NY: random House, 2003), pg. 102.



Defense Secretary Rumsfeld declared North Korea a 'terrorist state,' and ordered twenty-four long-range bombers to be put on alert for a possible strike role.<sup>34</sup> In the event of North Korea's refusal to accede to these demands, direct action could include an air and naval blockade of the country. Simultaneously, U.S. troops in South Korea would be redeployed to take them beyond range of North Korean attacks. The most direct response of course would be striking Pyongyang's nuclear facilities, even though U.S. intelligence has not been aware of all its facilities.<sup>35</sup> Specifically, military action included striking the Yongbyon reactor, the most prominent nuclear facility, a complex that contains a reactor and plutonium reprocessing plant.<sup>36</sup>

The U.S. also demonstrated its hard-line response through regular military exercises with allies in the region, especially South Korea. One view held that military exercises could help deter the north from making any aggressive moves in the peninsula.<sup>37</sup> The problem with this view was that instead of pressurizing the North, it risked provoking it into aggression, because of Pyongyang's obsession with regime survival.

U.S. counter-moves also involved taking proactive measures to defend itself by beginning the installation of anti-ballistic missile systems in the region. The initial stages of this project began in the second half of 2004 with the arrival of state of the art destroyers of the 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet off the waters of North Korea.<sup>38</sup> Even though the project was not expected to be complete for some years, it represented an attempt to degrade the North's missile capability, to make American threats more credible. North Korea's attempted missile tests in July 2006 immediately led to interceptor missile systems in Alaska being put on high alert.<sup>39</sup>

One of Washington's primary concerns was the threat of nuclear proliferation from North Korea. In this connection Washington introduced the Proliferation Security Initiative

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<sup>34</sup> Chae-Jin Lee, *A Troubled Peace: U.S. Policy and the Two Koreas*, (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), pg. 227.

<sup>35</sup> Frum and Perle, *An End to Evil: How to Win the War on Terror*, pp. 103-104

<sup>36</sup> J. Wolf, 'U.S. Can't Rule Out N. Korea Strike, Perle Says,' Reuters, June 11, 2003, <http://www.commondreams.org/headlines03/0611-09.htm>

<sup>37</sup> T.C. Stevens, D.J. Smith, C. Downs, and R. Dujarric, 'Deterring North Korea: U.S. Options.' *Comparative Strategy*. Vol. 22, No. 5, December 2003, pg. 495.

<sup>38</sup> 'U.S. destroyers deploying off N. Korea,' MSNBC, September 24, 2004, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6091020/>

<sup>39</sup> William Yardley, 'A Missile Defense System is Taking Shape in Alaska,' *The New York Times*, December 10, 2006.

(PSI) in 2003 to prevent North Korea from peddling its WMD and missile proliferation wares. While it was broadly aimed at countering all proliferation, it was recognized by U.S. policymakers as being especially aimed at North Korea and Iran. However, this framework, which is outside the nonproliferation regime, was hampered because other states in the Six Party talks, China, Japan, and South Korea were uneasy about the legality of the system, which seeks to interdict ships on the high seas suspected of carrying WMD-related materials.<sup>40</sup> This framework did have some low profile successes in 2002-03, including preventing Pyongyang from acquiring missile propellant related equipment as well as prevailing on China to halt the supply of chemicals related to the nuclear weapons program.<sup>41</sup>

Prior to the PSI, in December 2002 U.S. special forces boarded and searched a North Korean ship in the Arabian Sea, which was found to be carrying Scud missiles to Yemen, in what was a legitimate sale. While the U.S. allowed the ship to proceed with its cargo, Pyongyang bitterly protested Washington's move, and its spokesman stated that the U.S. had committed "unpardonable piracy that wantonly encroached upon the sovereignty of the DPRK."<sup>42</sup> But as far as helping pressurizing North Korea to denuclearize, this system did not have much success. The program's strength lay in denying Pyongyang new materials rather than actually degrading its existing capability, which was the non-negotiable U.S. objective.

The U.S. recognized that a key element of successful coercion is a carrot and stick policy which helps reduce the target's motivation to resist. However, a key problem has been the sequencing of such a deal. The U.S. has insisted that the first step had to be complete, verifiable, irreversible disarmament (CVID)<sup>43</sup> but North Korea insisted that the U.S. offer concessions first, in the form of fuel, financial and possibly security guarantees.<sup>44</sup> Washington rejected proposals such as the one by Russia in January 2003,

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<sup>40</sup> James Cotton, 'The Proliferation Security Initiative and North Korea: Legality and Limitations of a Coalition Strategy,' *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 36(2), pp. 193-211.

<sup>41</sup> Michael Sheridan, 'West mounts 'secret war' to keep nuclear North Korea in check,' *The Times* (London), July 9, 2006.

<sup>42</sup> 'North Korea attacks U.S. 'piracy,' CNN.com, December 13, 2002.

<sup>43</sup> L. Kwang-Chul, 'Don't Just Trust, Verify – Dismantling North Korea's Nuclear Program,' *Arms Control Today*, May 2004.

<sup>44</sup> Anne Wu, 'What China Whispers to North Korea,' *The Washington Quarterly*, Spring 2005, pg. 41.

under which security guarantees would be offered to North Korea in exchange for a nuclear freeze. Therefore, with this hard-line approach, Washington was able to display strong resolve and determination, but from the perspective of lessening the adversary's motivation to resist, it offered no concessions. The experience of the 1994 Agreed Framework ruled out any similar agreement, as Pyongyang had carried its surreptitious uranium-enrichment program in violation of the 1994 deal. When it came to power in January 2001, the Bush administration had criticized its predecessor on its North Korea policy for not being aggressive enough and for having adopted an appeasement attitude. Even before October 2002, the administration was gearing up for sterner measures. Consequently, the idea of offering concessions simultaneous to CVID was seen as submitting to nuclear blackmail.

But it is not as if possible concessionary strategies were unavailable. One suggested policy was a 'grand bargain' that would have involved energy, economic, military and diplomatic initiatives, such as transfer of conventional sources of energy in return for dismantling the nuclear weapons program, and drastic reductions in troop strengths on both sides.<sup>45</sup> The problem with the 1994 agreement was that it was tactical and crisis-driven, and left in place the nuclear program. Other strategies included a variant of the Nunn-Lugar cooperative threat reduction program under which economic help could have been provided by North Korea's neighbors in return for dismantling its nuclear program.<sup>46</sup> Security assurances on the lines of those provided to Ukraine in 1994 under the Nunn-Lugar program were also proposed for Pyongyang.<sup>47</sup> But such carrot and stick policies were not seriously considered by the U.S., which meant that the asymmetry of interests remained tilted against Washington. To reduce the target's motivation to resist, offering concessions plays an important role.

American objectives of counter proliferation in North Korea also reflected higher ambitions of preventing the emergence of a threat to U.S. dominance. In the post-Cold War period, policymakers in Washington considered a more aggressive approach, under which

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<sup>45</sup> Michael O'Hanlon and M. Mochizuki, 'Toward a Grand Bargain with North Korea,' *The Washington Quarterly*, Autumn 2003.

<sup>46</sup> J. E. Goodby, 'Nuclear Talks will Test Six Nations in Beijing,' *The Financial Times*, February 24, 2004.

<sup>47</sup> R. Gottenmoeller, 'A Deal That Worked,' *The New York Times*, April 26, 2003.

the U.S. would do whatever possible to prevent the emergence of a countervailing power.<sup>48</sup> Thus the high magnitude of North Korean demands was countered by higher ambitions on the part of the U.S., which again encouraged high magnitude demand which are relatively incompatible with the practice of coercive diplomacy. Another important factor is the type of provocation, which helps establish the target's culpability. If the target's provocative action is unequivocally against all international norms and laws such as the occupation of foreign territory, it becomes easier to pin the blame and gain international support for coercive action. In this case, while there was support from the international community on the need for denuclearizing North Korea, the dispute was over the means to achieve this objective.

Coercion is also strengthened by the element of urgency.<sup>49</sup> But in this case it worked against the U.S. The passage of time without any deal only brought North Korea closer to nuclear capability,<sup>50</sup> and it then demonstrated this capability in October 2006. Washington was not able to establish a sense of urgency in the North Korean regime, by assuming that isolating it would be effective enough. Some hard-line policymakers in the U.S. in fact favored a 'malign neglect' strategy because of which North Korea would acquire nuclear weapons and that would provide enough justification for aggressive military action.<sup>51</sup> Thus, here the view was to reinforce the type of provocation to make coercive action more favorable. But in that scenario, the credibility of U.S. military threats would decrease further, as Pyongyang would then have a full-fledged nuclear arsenal. This was consistent with a growing opinion that Pyongyang might just be trying to force the rest of the world to accept it as a de facto nuclear weapons state, and all its talk of freezing and eventual dismantling could be to buy some more time.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> See James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, (New York, NY: Viking, 2004), pg. 199 and B. Gellman, 'Keeping the U.S. First; Pentagon Would Preclude a Rival Superpower,' *The Washington Post*, March 11, 1992. According to the National Security Strategy 2002, "... as a matter of common sense and self-defense, America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed."

<sup>49</sup> Alexander L. George, 'Coercive Diplomacy: Definition and Characteristics,' pg. 17.

<sup>50</sup> Peter Brooks, 'Iran's nuke program must be defused,' *Boston Herald*, March 9, 2004.

<sup>51</sup> Chung-in Moon and Jong-Yun Bae, 'The Bush Doctrine and the North Korean Nuclear Crisis,' pg. 15.

<sup>52</sup> Ted G. Carpenter, 'Living with the Unthinkable,' *The National Interest*, Winter 2003/2004, pg. 93.

## CVID and the lack of clarity of settlement conditions

For both sides a significant hurdle in terms of objectives and the willingness to make concessions was a deep mistrust of the adversary based on past behavior. This past behavior centered around commitments that neither side made as part of the 1994 Agreed Framework. From the U.S. perspective, Pyongyang violated the agreement with its secret nuclear program, while from the North Korea angle, the U.S. did not supply promised items, such as a light-water reactor.<sup>53</sup> Because of this mistrust, there was a significant lack of clarity over eventual settlements.

North Korea alleged that part of the reason for the 2002 crisis was that Washington did not fulfill its end of the bargain under the 1994 Agreed Framework. This included delay in oil shipments, lack of trade liberalization, and a refusal to introduce full diplomatic relations that North Korea perceived was part of the arrangement.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, this was an attempt to frame the case in a manner unfavorable to the U.S. by exploiting the type of provocation factor. The U.S. position was that by going ahead with a surreptitious uranium enrichment project, the North Korean regime had broken its commitment to freeze its nuclear program under the 1994 agreement.

Thus, both sides argued that the type of provocation issue was the fault of the other because of broken commitments. The result was that Washington insisted on complete, verifiable, irreversible, disarmament (CVID) as the primary condition for any negotiation on concessions or bilateral security guarantees. However, as some scholars have pointed out there was no clear road map for the most part about what CVID would entail. Moreover, comprehensive CVID would take years to implement.<sup>55</sup> In the interim, Washington might have continued its policy of isolating DPRK and waiting for eventual fall of the regime. Thus, for North Korea this was hardly reassuring.

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<sup>53</sup> David C. Kang, 'International Relations Theory and the Second Korean War,' *International Studies Quarterly*, (2003), 47, pg. 321.

<sup>54</sup> R.E. Newnham, "'Nukes for Sale Cheap?' Purchasing Peace with North Korea,' *International Studies Perspectives*, Vol. 5, No. 2, May 2004, pg. 170.

<sup>55</sup> I am grateful to Prof. Davis B. Bobrow for this point.

## Mixed messages

A prominent factor in this episode was the lack of clarity of what the objectives were on both sides, as well as the threats that were conveyed to coerce the adversary. The Bush administration, when it came to office, decided that it would pursue a more hard-line agenda against Pyongyang. However, there was no unanimity about what this meant. It resulted in a plethora of demands, which detracted from the clarity of objective which is necessary for conveying threats and intentions to the adversary.

These mixed messages however, have come from both sides. After the October 2006 nuclear test, Pyongyang sent contradictory signals after discussions with a senior Chinese government figure, Tang Jiaxuan. In one account, the Chinese diplomat reported to the global media that the North Korean leader had expressed remorse for the nuclear test and had stated that there would be no more such tests. However, in another account, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stated that when the Chinese official briefed her about the meeting he did not mention any such statements from Kim Jong Il,<sup>56</sup> even though, if true, they would have been an important climb-down by North Korea.

It is entirely possible that this particular episode was an attempt by Pyongyang to moderate its coercive diplomacy objectives through statements that can be retracted or can be attributed to misinterpretation at a later stage. It is crucial to state, that at least in the initial days after this statement, the Chinese government made no attempt to clarify it, suggesting some interest in maintaining ambiguity over intentions in the interests of a peaceful settlement.

Regardless of the eventual result, it demonstrates that mixed messages in coercive diplomacy do not always make the situation more tense. In cases where one side would like to take a more moderate stance, mixed messages can mask any political or diplomatic loss of face. Thus the importance of mixed messages is that it helps the actor(s) claim plausible deniability in the event the situation worsens. Therefore, mixed messages and the accompanying plausible deniability can persuade an actor (or actors) in a coercive equation to take risks toward lessening tensions.

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<sup>56</sup> Melinda Liu and Sarah Schafer, 'Never Too Late to Say 'I'm Sorry'', *Newsweek* (web exclusive), October 21, 2006, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15363466/site/newsweek/>

Implications:

**What was the magnitude of objectives and how did this impact on the asymmetry of motivation/interests in coercive diplomacy?**

North Korea's objectives in the crisis revolved around regime survival which is the highest national interest for any ruler. As the analysis has shown, this objective was based on a perception that Washington's eventual goal was to bring about regime change in Pyongyang. If North Korea had consented to CVID as a precondition to any discussions on concessions and a non-aggression pact with the U.S., it would have left the Stalinist regime vulnerable to U.S. military threats. Therefore, according to experts who interviewed DPRK officials, Pyongyang's suspicions of U.S. intentions would decrease if *simultaneous* denuclearization and (in exchange) the supply of aid and energy took place.<sup>57</sup>

Thus, since DPRK's eventual objective was regime survival, its magnitude of demands reflected this high objective. However, from the U.S. perspective, because of North Korea's past record of deception and violation of the 1994 agreement, a simultaneous process of denuclearization as well as flow of economic aid was untenable.

Through its October 2006 nuclear test and attempted missile tests in July 2006, Pyongyang also sought to capture the attention of the U.S. and demonstrate the seriousness of its demands as well as threat capability. After the test, the North Korean ambassador to the U.S. stated that North Korea was forced to "prove its possession of nukes to protect its sovereignty and right to existence from the daily increasing danger of war from the United States."<sup>58</sup> However, from the U.S. perspective, this further entrenched the Bush administration's existing position. This was because any concessions by the U.S. after the test would have been seen as a reward for unacceptable behavior by North Korea. Thus, for both sides, the stakes became extremely high, further balancing the asymmetry of interests.

As the crisis dragged on, the opposing sides' positions became more and more entrenched. In the case of North Korea, according to some experts who visited the country,

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<sup>57</sup> Selig Harrison, quoted in 'Q&A: Selig Harrison on North Korea,' Council on Foreign Relations, May 11, 2004, [http://www.nytimes.com/cfr/international/slot2\\_051104.html?pagewanted=print&position=](http://www.nytimes.com/cfr/international/slot2_051104.html?pagewanted=print&position=)

<sup>58</sup> 'UN imposes sanctions on N.K.,' *The Korea Herald*, October 16, 2006.

it became more difficult for North Korea to renounce nuclear weapons after it declared publicly on February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2005 that it had assembled nuclear weapons; this was exacerbated by the October 2006 nuclear test.<sup>59</sup> From the coercive diplomacy perspective, by publicly aiming for such a high objective, Pyongyang found it difficult to back away.

As the section on objectives showed, for the U.S., talking directly with North Korea was too high a demand and contrary to Washington's non-negotiable position that only after CVID would any talk of concessions by the U.S. take place. On a broader level, Washington had backed itself into a corner from where it was difficult to make concessions, even if there was a desire to do so among Washington's policymakers. Even before the crisis, President Bush named DPRK as a member of the 'Axis of Evil' in the January 2002 State of the Union address,<sup>60</sup> one of the most important policy statements by the U.S. government. Further, the National Security Strategy, released a month before the crisis began in October 2002 also resolved to take firm measures against proliferators such as North Korea.<sup>61</sup> The importance of this point is that by publicly and repeatedly assuming such a high, non-negotiable objective, and by linking it inextricably to U.S. security, Washington diminished any chances of negotiation.

### **Did any modification of objectives take place?**

Modification of objectives by the coercer can frequently lead to a situation conducive to a settlement if the modified demands are less stringent and severe than the original ones. Pyongyang had several objectives in issuing its coercive threats. Apart from security guarantees and economic aid, increasingly, the regime also demanded that the U.S. remove the economic measures taken against North Korean criminal activities.<sup>62</sup>

Pyongyang's displeasure over the freezing of its financial assets was also heightened by the fact that instead of its financial interests in Macao (which had been a

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<sup>59</sup> Siegfried S. Hecker, 'Report on the North Korean Nuclear Program,' Nautilus Institute Policy Forum Online, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006, <http://nautilus.org/fora/security/0697Heckler.html>

<sup>60</sup> 'President Delivers State of the Union Address,' January 29, 2002, The White House, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>

<sup>61</sup> 'National Security Strategy,' The White House, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss5.html>

<sup>62</sup> For a summary of DPRK criminal activities, see David L. Asher, 'The North Korean Criminal State, its Ties to Organized Crime, and the Possibility of WMD Proliferation,' Nautilus Institute Policy Forum Online, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2005, <http://www.nautilus.org/fora/security/0592Asher.html>



major center for DPRK criminal activities), U.S. companies were expanding their presence especially through the lucrative casino industry.<sup>63</sup> But while the U.S. claimed that such economic actions were unconnected to the impasse over DPRK's nuclear program, Pyongyang's diplomats insisted that the nuclear issue would be off the agenda till Washington removed these economic measures.<sup>64</sup> Thus both sides tried to manipulate secondary points of dispute as a lever in the main issue – the nuclear program.

As this section showed, Washington had multiple objectives in North Korea. The South Asia chapter (ch. 2) showed how multiple objectives can have both negative and positive consequences for the state making the demands. It can make an adversary more rigid (negative effect) due to the numerous demands against it, but it can also make the adversary more flexible (positive effect) if only some objectives need to be fulfilled (modification of demands).

However, in this case, while the U.S. had multiple objectives there was no demonstrated hierarchy of these objectives. A hierarchy of objectives would have meant prioritization and therefore some possibility of compromise and modification of goals. A downward modification of objectives would have tilted the asymmetry of interests away from North Korea.

Thus, Washington's objectives ranged from denuclearization and suspected regime change to rolling back Pyongyang's criminal networks and promoting human rights by assisting North Korean refugees. But Washington did not create a hierarchy among these objectives, something which could have facilitated a conciliatory move through scaling down of demands. Washington refused to link financial sanctions (in response to North Korean criminal activities) with the nuclear issue. In February 2006, State Department spokesman Adam Ereli stated that, "If they are making linkages, that's their business. We're not making linkages. We and the other parties, I should stress, think that talks on denuclearizing in the Peninsula should resume on their own merits."<sup>65</sup>

Nevertheless, after the October 2006 nuclear test by North Korea, in an attempt to resume some multilateral discussions, Washington did dangle some incentives to the Kim

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<sup>63</sup> Barbara Demick, 'No More Gambling on N. Korea,' *The Los Angeles Times*, April 6, 2006.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> 'North Korea agrees to hold talks with US on counterfeiting,' YahooNews.com/AFP, February 23, 2006.

Jong Il regime, in return for certain commitments by Pyongyang. These commitments were said to include immediate dismantlement of some nuclear equipment such as a 5MW reactor that can process fuel into weapons grade material and a plutonium reprocessing facility.<sup>66</sup> Such steps are potentially a far cry from the non-negotiable CVID which, in any case, would have required years to implement. Thus, in the weeks after the October nuclear test, the U.S. began to show signs that it might be amenable to modification of objectives.

Furthermore, Washington's refusal to link demands (mentioned earlier in this subsection) also underwent a change. U.S. diplomats stated that they would be willing to discuss the financial sanctions issue (regarding the sanctions on Banco Delta Asia, the Macao bank) in the hope that it would lead to progress on the nuclear issue.<sup>67</sup>

These potentially radical changes in U.S. attitudes suggest that when the asymmetry of interest is balanced at a very high level, i.e., if both sides place enormous stakes on a dispute, a stalemate ensues, and it allows a rethinking of the magnitude, hierarchy, and linkage of objectives.

### **How did clarity of settlement conditions impact on coercive diplomacy?**

Clarity of settlement conditions reassures the parties to the dispute that any promises of concessions or 'carrots' would be adhered to and would not be unilaterally abrogated. Therefore, the higher the clarity of settlement conditions, the greater is the chance of a peaceful resolution and/or concession to the demands by the target state. But, in this case, clarity of settlement conditions was lacking and played a crucial role in hardening the opposing positions.

As stated previously, the main point of dispute was over CVID (complete, verifiable, irreversible disarmament). However, for the most part, Washington did not offer clear positions on the process of CVID, and dismissed recommendations of other Six-Party members that an Agreed Framework-type series of negotiations with Pyongyang would make the route clear.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, while the agreement reached at the Six Party Talks in September 2005 talked about denuclearization coupled with U.S. security guarantees and

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<sup>66</sup> Helene Cooper & David E. Sanger, 'U.S. Signals New Incentives for North Korea,' *The New York Times*, November 19, 2006.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Scott Snyder, 'The Fire Last Time,' *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2004.

economic aid, it did not specify any roadmap to the process of CVID.<sup>69</sup> Thus, for the Kim Jong Il regime there were no adequate reassurances that its interests would be protected.

Interestingly, developments in November 2006 hinted that the U.S. might be willing to modify demands (see previous subsection). Such a move would be conducive to more clarity of settlement conditions.

**Did the objectives show any difference in the way the two sides viewed the demands as representing different variants of coercive diplomacy (Types A, B, or C)? In other words, did the coercive policy reflect different coercive diplomacy consequences for the two protagonists?**

It is clear that U.S. coercive threats were interpreted by Pyongyang as representing eventual Type C coercive diplomacy. And this persuaded North Korea to ratchet up its threats. A difference of opinion on which variant of coercive diplomacy is being pursued can also impact on reassurance strategies. Washington could have claimed that its demands reflected goals of behavior change in Pyongyang (Type B) and offered concessions accordingly. But since the Kim regime was convinced that Type C CD was the goal, such concessions of future security guarantees were not enough. Therefore, it is clear that reassurances have to be conditioned to clearly suit a particular variant of CD.

An intriguing line of analysis is that North Korea was also pursuing Type C coercive diplomacy. Some analysts also stated that part of the reason why North Korea was so adamant was because it was waiting out the Bush administration in the hope that the 2008 U.S. Presidential election would bring in a more pliable administration.<sup>70</sup> It is possible that by ensuring a stalemate through high demands, North Korea wanted to contribute to failures of the Bush administration which would pay off in the 2008 election. It would therefore be useful to speculate that if this was so, it shows a different approach to Type C CD – one in which the coercer passively seeks regime change in the target, as opposed to direct intervention. It also demonstrates that objectives modification which

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<sup>69</sup> Davis B. Bobrow, 'Japan and the Two Koreas: Managing Dependency, Pursuing Autonomy,' unpublished paper, October 2006, pg. 34.

<sup>70</sup> Mark Magnier, 'N. Korea agrees to return to 6-party nuclear talks,' *The Los Angeles Times*, October 31, 2006.

generally moderate the coercer's goals, can also work the other way, i.e., the coercer's objectives can increase to type C (regime change) from type b (behavior change).

The following table summarizes the arguments in this section:

**Table 18: North Korean case: Objectives**

<b><u>Objectives</u></b>	<b>Carrots?</b>	<b>Coercive Diplomacy consequence</b>
<b>U.S. objectives</b> - denuclearization - no concessions  <b>North Korean objectives</b> - Direct talks with U.S. - End sanctions - supply fuel  No modification of objectives	No	Sequencing of deal problematic, U.S. wants complete verifiable disarmament first.  Also, suspicion that North Korea intends to keep nuclear weapons anyway, so no deal.  From the U.S. perspective, Pyongyang's demands too high.  Stalemate continued.

## **CREDIBILITY OF THREATS**

Credibility of threats is an essential component of coercive diplomacy which, if adequately present, convinces the target that the coercer has both resolve and capability to carry out its threats. In the absence of credibility, the target's willingness to resist increases. In this particular case both coercer (North Korea) as well as targets (U.S., South Korea and Japan) had more than adequate fire power to make the image of war catastrophic.

U.S. threats from the beginning itself were beset with credibility problems. On the military level, two factors decreased the credibility of U.S. threats. First, the extension of U.S. forces across the world, especially in Afghanistan and Iraq. Second, the North Korean military capability was (and still is) strong enough to deny the U.S. a quick victory and in fact was able to issue substantial military threats of its own.

North Korean military threats were taken quite seriously by its neighbors, especially Japan. Tokyo was concerned about the roughly one hundred Nodong missiles that Pyongyang had aimed at Japan and which could carry chemical and nuclear

warheads.<sup>71</sup> However, the mainstay of the North Korean military is the army. The North Korean People's Army (NKPA), 1.2 million strong, is the fourth largest army in the world and more than a match for the South Korean army, which is about half a million strong and the 37,000 U.S. troops stationed there. Crucially, the NKPA's 125,000-member Special Operations Force (equivalent to Iraq's Republican Guard) is said to be one of the largest such forces in the world.<sup>72</sup> Such a massive highly trained section of the army can pose a potent threat behind enemy lines. North Korea's missile strength (especially the 1,200-mile Taepo Dong-I missiles and the medium range Nodong missiles) is also a major threat, if not to continental United States, then at least to U.S. interests as well as those of its allies in the region.

Soon after the Bush administration took office in 2001, it became obvious that the Pentagon's plan for war against North Korea was not adequate. The contingency plan for war, Op Plan 5027 was shown to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in 2001 and it was clear that the plan was unwieldy because it was concerned mainly with transporting massive troop levels to the area.<sup>73</sup> While this plan was subsequently updated, the North Korean army still posed a substantial threat to U.S. and South Korean forces.

A key element of any U.S. military attack would be controlling escalation in the peninsula, i.e., neutralizing North Korean aircraft and artillery. While this can be achieved, problematic elements are North Korea's missile strength and its chemical weapons. Pyongyang runs a minimum of 12 chemical weapons factories manufacturing 4,500 tons of mustard gas, phosgene, sarin, as well as V-type chemical agents and also possesses adequate delivery systems for these weapons.<sup>74</sup> U.S. military sources have testified that chemical weapons could be a 'showstopper' and that these weapons have been integrated with North Korean artillery aimed at Seoul.<sup>75</sup> For the U.S. military, to prevent escalation it would have to quickly neutralize Pyongyang's missile, nuclear, and chemical weapons

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<sup>71</sup> Katsu Furuwaka, 'Japan's View of the Korea Crisis,' Center for Nonproliferation Studies, February 25, 2003, <http://cns.miis.edu/research/korea/jpndprk.htm>

<sup>72</sup> Scott Stossel, 'North Korea: The War Game,' *The Atlantic Monthly*, July/August 2005.

<sup>73</sup> Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2004), pp. 31-32.

<sup>74</sup> Jasper Becker, *Rogue Regime: Kim Jong Il and the Looming Threat of North Korea*, (New York, NY, Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 261-62.

<sup>75</sup> Scott Stossel, 'North Korea: The War Game.'

installations, and would require up to 4,000 sorties per day (as opposed to the 800 per day carried out in Iraq).<sup>76</sup>

Credibility of U.S. resistance to North Korean threats as well as counter-threats was also damaged because of disputes with South Korea in 2005. The Seoul government rejected Op. Plan 5029, a contingency strategy for dealing with consequences of the fall of the current North Korean regime. South Korea's grievance was that in such a scenario, the U.S. would take the lead in controlling the North, an unacceptable plan for the South as it regards the entire Korean peninsula as its own territory.<sup>77</sup>

To counter possible U.S. military strikes, the North Korean military studied recent U.S. military operations such as the 1999 Kosovo conflict, concentrating especially on the perceived U.S. reluctance to deploy large scale ground troops. The North Korean People's Army (NKPA) concluded that the U.S. would rely on high-tech weaponry, including cruise missiles and precision-bombing., and on this basis the NKPA decided to focus on defensive frameworks to survive an air campaign and electronic warfare.<sup>78</sup> The NKPA also assumed, after studying the 1991 Gulf War, that the U.S. would take too long to deploy adequate numbers of ground forces for a campaign.<sup>79</sup> This would provide adequate time for the international community to step in and pressurize the two sides to desist from conflict.

U.S. military options have concentrated on destroying North Korea's nuclear facilities. A 1994 plan centered on destroying the Yongbyon facility involved little risk of U.S. casualties but factored in a North Korean counterattack on the south, which would leave hundreds of thousands people killed.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, even at that time, decision makers in the U.S. had concluded that Pyongyang might have been able to manufacture one or two nuclear devices, though this wouldn't change the eventual nature of the conflict.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Barbara Demick, 'S. Korea Rejected U.S. Plan on North,' *The Los Angeles Times*, April 16, 2005.

<sup>78</sup> James M. Minnich, *The North Korean People's Army: Origins and Current Tactics*, (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2005), pg. 68.

<sup>79</sup> James M. Minnich, *The North Korean People's Army: Origins and Current Tactics*, pp. 67-68.

<sup>80</sup> Ashton Carter & William Perry, *Preventive Defense*, (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), pg. 128.

<sup>81</sup> Carter & Perry, *Preventive Defense*, pg. 130.

In 1994, war nearly broke out between the United States and North Korea; the general impression among American policymakers was that any war would lead to about a million casualties. This calculation remains unchanged.<sup>82</sup> In terms of targets too there is no certainty. For example, plutonium adequate for about six devices was stored at Yongbyon for eight years after the 1994 agreement. But unknown amounts were moved away to locations that were not confirmed, at least publicly.<sup>83</sup> This made the task of any attacking force even more difficult. Another relevant factor, both in 1994 and in the most recent crisis, was the possibility of a preemptive attack by North Korea in response to perceptions in Pyongyang that the U.S. and its allies were preparing for a military attack.

Analysis of credibility also has to be considered in the context of U.S. military deployments in recent years. After 9/11, thousands of U.S. troops were deployed in Operation Enduring Freedom, and many still remain there. By early 2003, more than a hundred thousand troops arrived in the Middle East to launch Operation Iraqi Freedom in March. As the Iraqi insurgency gained strength, it soon became clear that the campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan had already stretched the U.S. military,<sup>84</sup> and therefore, deployment of troops for a major military campaign in another sector would be very difficult. Deployment problems were also revealed in a 2004-05 South Korean government report which stated that in the event of a conflict, Washington would deploy up to 690,000 troops as well as 2,000 fighter planes.<sup>85</sup> Considering that after the March 2003 Iraq invasion, the U.S. military has been bogged down without adequate personnel, it is unclear how the U.S. government would have been able to deploy such a massive force to yet another front.

Further, by the end of February 2005, when North Korea announced that it had nuclear weapons, the U.S. military had already suffered almost 1,500 casualties in Iraq.<sup>86</sup> It would have been difficult to rally around public opinion in the U.S., which was already increasingly dissatisfied with U.S. policies in Iraq, even if the threat from Pyongyang was

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<sup>82</sup> V. Loeb and P. Slevin, 'Overcoming North Korea's 'Tyranny of Proximity'', *The Washington Post*, January 20, 2003.

<sup>83</sup> A.B. Carter, W.J. Perry, J.M. Shalikashvili, 'A Scary Thought: Loose Nukes in North Korea,' *The Wall Street Journal*, February 6, 2003.

<sup>84</sup> James Fallows, 'The Hollow Army,' *The Atlantic*, March 2004.

<sup>85</sup> Erich Marquardt, 'US struggles to place pressure on N Korea,' PINR, March 23, 2005, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/news/sw/details.cfm?ID=10989>

<sup>86</sup> Iraq Coalition Casualties, <http://icasualties.org/oif/> (the casualty figure from the period March 2003-February 2005 is 1499 U.S. military deaths.)

more justified. This was factored in by Kim Jong Il, who has believed that once the casualty level rose above 20,000, public opinion in the U.S. would make it very difficult for the U.S. to fight a long war.<sup>87</sup> The perceived manipulation of intelligence by the Bush administration had already set a higher benchmark for the intelligence agencies on the basis of which to prove the culpability of yet another ‘rogue’ regime.

The significance of this analysis is that it shows that components of coercive diplomacy were not in favor of the U.S. The image of war was catastrophic not just for Washington but also for its regional allies in the region. Chances of successful coercive diplomacy are enhanced if, in the target’s mindset, the threat of escalation of conflict is unacceptable. There was no indication that for North Korea this was a pressing concern.

## Threats and Bluffs

This previous section examined the capabilities on each side as well as the accompanying image of war for policymakers. For policymakers an important element of issuing credible threats is the ability to convince the adversary of the seriousness of its threats. Throughout the crisis, the fundamental premise of all U.S. counter-threats was that North Korea would not be allowed to develop nuclear weapons. Speaking in 2003, President Bush declared, “We will not tolerate nuclear weapons in North Korea. We will not give into blackmail. We will not settle for anything less than the complete, verifiable, and irreversible elimination of North Korea's nuclear weapons program.”<sup>88</sup>

But with two events in 2006, Pyongyang called Washington’s bluff. The first was in July with a series of missile tests that represented a challenge to North Korea’s adversaries, even though the tests were only partially successful. The second was the October 2006 nuclear test. Thus the proverbial ball was in Washington’s court, because the Bush administration now had to make good its resolve to not allow Pyongyang to reach nuclear status.

Not surprisingly, after initial condemnations, in November 2006 it was declared that the Six Party Talks would be resurrected in December. Washington was even willing

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<sup>87</sup> Jasper Becker, *Rogue Regime: Kim Jong Il and the Looming Threat of North Korea*, pg. 153.

<sup>88</sup> Transcript, Joint Press Conference, ‘President Bush Meets With Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi,’ The White House, May 23, 2003, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/05/20030523-4.html>



to talk about incentives that might be offered in exchange for North dismantling some nuclear equipment. This move away from the rigid CVID demand was a signal that further bluffing may not work, due to low U.S. threat credibility. According to one prominent scholar of coercive diplomacy, “the United States should not start down the road of coercive diplomacy, unless it is willing to resort to war or unless it has devised a political strategy that will enable it to back down without too much loss of face should coercive diplomacy fail.”<sup>89</sup> From Washington’s perspective, further threats or hard-line positions might just have worsened the situation and lowered its credibility further.

North Korea was therefore well-positioned to call Washington's bluff. Paradoxically, the Iraq campaign which might have demonstrated U.S. resolve to take military action against North Korea, ended up hampering Washington’s force projection capability. Not just that, it only proved to North Korea that unless it possessed weapons of mass destruction, the U.S. could not be deterred. Moreover, while the Bush administration was resolute in the objective – nuclear rollback – senior officials did not necessarily demonstrate a willingness to launch military strikes. For example, Vice President Dick Cheney, who was known to have a hard-line approach toward ‘rogue’ regimes, stated in March 2003 that, “The situation in North Korea is very serious... Each set of circumstances we’re faced with around the world is different. It doesn’t automatically mean an approach that makes sense in Iraq is necessarily an approach that would make sense in North Korea. North Korea, we think the key is a multilateral approach. Everybody always wants us to be multilateral and we think it’s appropriate here.”<sup>90</sup> Therefore, the fact that different standards were being applied to North Korea and Iraq, suggested that the U.S. was not as ready to use force as it was in Iraq.

Thus, while bluffing can be used to convey certain demands and accompanying threats, if the adversary calls the bluff, the coercer has no option but to carry out its threat to save face or to kick-start a conciliatory process.

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<sup>89</sup> Robert J. Art, ‘Coercive diplomacy: What do we know?’ in Robert J. Art & Patrick M. Cronin (ed.) *The United States and Coercive Diplomacy*, (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2003), pp. 408-409.

<sup>90</sup> Transcript, NBC ‘Meet the Press’ interview with Vice President Dick Cheney, March 16, 2003, <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/bush/cheneymeetthepress.htm>

Implications:

**How did credibility of threats impact on coercive diplomacy?**

While both U.S. and South Korean military had enough firepower (even conventional) to impose huge damage on North Korea, the overall destruction that such a conflict would cause was too horrifying. Thus the image of war was too catastrophic for North Korea's adversaries. In any coercive equation, the worse the image of war, the greater is the proclivity of at some concerned parties to look for a stabilizing settlement. Pentagon estimates in October 2006 stated that if the U.S. attacked North Korea there would be 52,000 U.S. military casualties, besides at least a million casualties, just in the first three months.<sup>91</sup>

From the U.S. perspective, the pressure tactics that it did apply were also not enough to counter North Korea. One of the main instruments was the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), which was mentioned earlier. PSI aimed at interdicting the shipment of WMD-related material to and from North Korea (among other suspected proliferators). Expectedly, Pyongyang vehemently criticized PSI, calling it "U.S.-led military operations whose purpose is to blockade the country."<sup>92</sup> Moreover, South Korea refused to join PSI, which obviously further detracted from its credibility. From the coercion point of view, it was not clear how PSI could act as an instrument of U.S. counter threats, because it could not effectively degrade or roll back Pyongyang's existing nuclear capability. As the October 2006 nuclear test by North Korea showed, the regime does have the wherewithal to construct nuclear weapons, however rudimentary they might be at this stage. PSI had no effect on this capability and therefore did not assist in the key U.S. objective of denuclearization of North Korea.

By operating in international waters, PSI enabled Washington to apply a financial squeeze of the country in a bid to foment instability – but little more. Thus, the proactive measures that Washington took were hardly credible in terms of demonstrating an ability to inflict immediate punishment. U.S. counter-threats therefore suffered from a lack of

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<sup>91</sup> Mark Dunn, 'US fears 'hell' of a response,' *The Herald Sun*, October 12, 2006, <http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,20565819-661,00.html>

<sup>92</sup> 'PSI: 'Will Hit N. Korea Where it Hurts,' Chosun.com, <http://english.chosun.com/w21data/html/news/200610/200610270024.html>

urgency, without which it is difficult to get the target to understand the gravity of the situation.

In the 1990s, U.S. military planners tried to formulate plans that would involve striking only nuclear facilities, in an attempt to reassure Pyongyang that regime change was not on the agenda.<sup>93</sup> However, Pyongyang's reaction was assumed to be too unpredictable. Moreover, North Korea might attack the South even if it were clear that the U.S. military objectives were limited. From the coercive diplomacy perspective, it can also imply that one state might completely refuse to accept reassurances from the other side in an attempt to maintain an unpredictable posture and because of a perception that even the slightest concession from it might open a window of opportunity for Type C coercion.

On the other hand, North Korea, even though it faced substantial U.S. and South Korean military capability, managed to retain some threat credibility even with a failed missile test in July 2006. At the very least it reiterated to North Korea's adversaries Pyongyang's ability and willingness to periodically indulge in brinkmanship. Even U.S. President George Bush had to concede its seriousness when he stated, "One thing that we have learnt is that the rocket did not stay up very long. It tumbled into the sea, which doesn't frankly, diminish my desire to solve this problem."<sup>94</sup>

Thus, while both sides have sufficient firepower to cause immense destruction, this was not enough to successfully coerce the other side. Nevertheless, brinkmanship by North Korea was taken very seriously by its neighbors and has frequently served its purpose for the North. As one scholar put it, "Pyongyang's goal is not to go over the brink, but to be pulled back from the brink."<sup>95</sup> And pulling North Korea from the brink required some amount of carrots/concessions. As the section on international strategic environment demonstrates, the various regional parties, in fact, periodically satisfied Pyongyang's demands through economic concessions and energy aid. In this manner, North Korea's threats were relatively successful, because they did achieve some of its coercive demands, though not from the Washington.

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<sup>93</sup> John Barry, 'A Script for Doomsday,' *Newsweek*, October 19, 2006.

<sup>94</sup> James Sterngold, 'Missile Failure Masks Success,' *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 6, 2006.

<sup>95</sup> Edward A. Olsen, 'The Goal of North Korean Brinkmanship: Mediation,' *Strategic Insights*, Vol. III, Issue 3, March 2004.

A second benefit was that it demonstrated to other regional actors that siding with the U.S. in a coercive activity against Pyongyang would be detrimental to their interests. A third benefit for Pyongyang was that through such blatant demonstrations of threats, it persuaded these regional parties to encourage Washington to provide some concessions to North Korea, especially through security guarantees.<sup>96</sup> In the immediate period after the North Korean nuclear test, when the concerned states talked about re-launching the Six Party Talks, one distinguishing feature was that Washington was more readily talking about various concessions, including possible lifting of sanctions on financial institutions connected to North Korean criminal activities.<sup>97</sup> Thus it is safe to assume that North Korean threat credibility has been more effective against the non-U.S. members of the Six Party Talks, and has led to partially successful coercive diplomacy by Pyongyang.

**Table 19: North Korean case: Credibility of Threats**

<b>Credibility of Threats</b>	<b>Coercive Diplomacy consequence</b>
<p><b>U.S. Credibility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extension of U.S. forces around the world</li> <li>- Unclear if North Korean nuclear, missile, and chemical weapon sites can all be destroyed before escalation.</li> <li>- Unclear if U.S. was willing to apply force</li> </ul> <p><b>North Korean Credibility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- North Korean brinkmanship did convince regional actors to negotiate, and offer some concessions.</li> </ul>	<p>Therefore, U.S. military credibility not very high.</p> <p>Success of some North Korean demands, especially food and economic aid. Demonstrated to regional allies the perils of siding with U.S. coercion. Regional actors encouraged U.S. to provide some concessions.</p>

<sup>96</sup> Tony Karon, 'North Korea's Missile Test: Diplomatic Arm-Twisting,' *Time*, July 5, 2006.

<sup>97</sup> Helene Cooper & David E. Sanger, 'U.S. signals new incentives for North Korea,' *The New York Times*, November 19, 2006.

## INTERNAL FACTORS

A key question here is – why North Korea managed to resist multilateral coercion in the face of economic catastrophe and isolation, and in fact launched coercive threats of its own? Part of the answer is that Pyongyang's illegal economic activities that allowed it to retain some economic resources to shore up the military and the regime elites. In recent years, there have been persistent rumors of power struggles within the regime, especially over the role of the military. North Korea's economic isolation has adversely impacted on the status of the regime's elites, leading to some dissatisfaction. In such a scenario, a major priority for Kim Jong Il was to maintain the standards of living of the elites, and also to maintain his hold over the military.

From the coercive diplomacy standpoint, Kim's threats and demands were related to a need to consolidate his rule, as is the regime's involvement in illegal economic activities. For years it has been a key proliferator of missiles, and has received in exchange, nuclear technology from Pakistan as well as money from other states. In recent years, it earned up to \$500 million annually from the sale of missiles to countries such as Pakistan, Iran, Syria, and Yemen.<sup>98</sup> But apart from this, the regime's substantial role in counterfeiting and drug trafficking has also been noted.

All this points to a need to consolidate the internal rule, a factor recognized by Washington. In 2004-05, the U.S. government imposed sanctions on several North Korean firms and froze their accounts in foreign banks in an attempt to tighten the cash flow into the regime. However, as some experts noted in 2006, such a policy had the paradoxical effect of forcing Kim to ratchet up domestic support further.<sup>99</sup>

### Internal power struggles in North Korea

North Korea's coercive demands had to be examined in the context of internal power struggles within the regime. During that period, Kim Jong Il sought to consolidate his rule,

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<sup>98</sup> Barbara Demick, 'In N. Korea, Weapons are Key Instrument of Power,' *Los Angeles Times*, July 30, 2006.

<sup>99</sup> Daniel A. Pinkston, 'Will North Korea launch a Long-range Missile?' Nautilus Institute Policy Forum Online, June 16, 2006, <http://www.nautilus.org/fora/security/0648Pinkston.html>

and according to some sources he tried to pave the way for eventual succession by one of his sons, possibly Kim Jong-Chol. In this context, Kim Jong Il's brother-in-law Jang Song Thaek was removed as the second-highest ranking leader in April 2004. European experts saw this as a salvo in the ongoing power struggle in the leadership.<sup>100</sup> Jang was considered more acceptable than Kim and was mentioned in South Korea as a possible replacement who commanded respect from both, the communist part and the military, a rare achievement.<sup>101</sup> His ouster was seen as Kim's attempt to consolidate control over the military.

This also has to be seen in connection with a massive explosion at a railway station in North Korea in May 2004, hours after Kim Jong Il had traveled through. This incident was regarded as an assassination attempt and if so, it signaled some dissatisfaction in the immensely controlled totalitarian regime. Regarding the succession ladder, there was considerable speculation over which of Kim's sons would be chosen. These events coincided with rumors in late 2004 of major challenges to Kim's hold on power.<sup>102</sup>

Experts also stated that part of the reason for the power struggle was that increasingly, the military was convinced that the next ruler should come from outside the ruling family (this probably referred to the immediate family and not the ousted Jang). It was widely believed that if a member of the Kim family became the next leader, the same policies would be continued and there would be no positive moves on the nuclear and economic issues.<sup>103</sup> This approach implied that paradigmatic changes in the North depended on an outsider taking power.

From the coercive diplomacy perspective, it suggests that one possible reason for Kim's coercive demands was to safeguard his rule by (a) presenting a nationalistic image to the domestic elites which would rally them around, and (b) using brinkmanship diplomacy to extort more aid from the international community which would pacify the

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<sup>100</sup> Is Kim Jong-il preparing his succession or strengthening his hold on power,' Pime Japan, February 15, 2005, [http://www.pimejapan.com/society\\_2005/articolo\\_20050215a.htm](http://www.pimejapan.com/society_2005/articolo_20050215a.htm)

<sup>101</sup> Barbara Demick, 'Kim Ousts Key Relative, a Potential Rival, From N. Korean Government,' *Los Angeles Times*, December 9, 2004.

<sup>102</sup> Jonathan Watts, 'Tremors that may signal political earthquake in North Korea,' *The Guardian*, December 23, 20004

<sup>103</sup> Sarah Buckley, 'Who will lead North Korea next? BBC News, February 15, 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/asia-pacific/4715438.stm>

military. Furthermore, from March 2003, the official status of the military was raised with the proclamation of the 'songun' principle, which stood for 'military first.'<sup>104</sup> It coincided with a period of increased military threats by the U.S. and was therefore a way of consolidating Kim's domestic leadership by offering sops to the military. The attempted missile tests in July 2006 were also seen as a mechanism for consolidating the internal base, through their nationalistic overtones as well as the acceptance of the wishes of elements in military who favored the acquisition of long-range missiles.<sup>105</sup>

Increased profile of the military as well as coercive moves on the outside world thus reinforced each other. Indeed, the view in Pyongyang was that the strengthened position of the military was integral to resisting U.S. pressures, and shortly after the invasion of Iraq, further statements in the official North Korean media declared that the nuclear option was now an essential component of the military.<sup>106</sup> It can therefore be concluded that with this move, Kim sought to co-opt the military further into the tough nuclear stance, and also make resistance to the U.S. as well as counter-coercive threats more potent.

In order to consolidate his rule, Kim's regime also introduced some limited economic reforms and used illegal activities to gain more profits. This partly helps to explain why Kim was able to survive internally in the face of U.S. attempts at isolating him totally.

## Economic activities – legal and illegal

The North Korean regime had been involved in counterfeiting for decades and in recent years, the U.S. government took stern measures, such as clamping down on banks in the Chinese territory of Macau that were accused of laundering money on behalf of North

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<sup>104</sup> Paul French, *North Korea: The Paranoid Peninsula*, (New York, NY: Zed Books, 2005), pp. 216-17.

<sup>105</sup> Daniel A. Pinkston, 'Will North Korea launch a Long-range Missile?' Nautilus Institute Policy Forum Online, June 16, 2006, <http://www.nautilus.org/fora/security/0648Pinkston.html>

<sup>106</sup> Paul French, *North Korea: The Paranoid Peninsula*, pg. 219.

Korea.<sup>107</sup> Investigations by U.S. government agencies revealed that such activities were carried out by the regime itself rather than criminal networks.

Even though the danger from North Korea's counterfeiting operations was relatively low, the Bush administration saw it as an economic threat and a hostile act because of the mistrust it generated in the U.S. currency.<sup>108</sup> But from Pyongyang's perspective, engaging in counterfeiting has not just been a way of responding to U.S. threats. For years it has also been a reflection of the regime's guiding principle – 'juche,' which roughly meant self-reliance or sovereignty. Juche also refers to compromising the sovereignty of other states, and therefore, it is also a method of consolidating the legitimacy of the regime.

As stated earlier, the North Korean perception was that the U.S. would attempt Type C coercion against Pyongyang and therefore it countered with coercive diplomacy with a high magnitude of objectives and strict conditions regarding clarity of settlement prerequisites. From the perspective of countering possible Type 'C' regime change coercive diplomacy, juche and the accompanying subversive economic activity was a way of responding to perceived threats to the rule of Kim Jong Il. Counterfeiting also helped assuage financial discontent among the elite sections of the regime, which expected luxury goods and services for themselves.<sup>109</sup>

North Korea's involvement in drug trafficking was another aspect of its illegal economic activities and included cultivation of opium poppies. According to U.S. government figures, 1995 estimates suggested that about 7,000 hectares of land was under poppy cultivation alongside a capability to process 100 tons of raw opium annually.<sup>110</sup> Apart from this Pyongyang also profited from the production and sale of methamphetamine and was said to produce about 10-15 tons per year. Indeed, since bad harvests negatively impacted on opium production, Pyongyang started concentrating more on methamphetamine production. All these illegal activities were carried out by 'Bureau

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<sup>107</sup> Mike Chinoy, 'Macau focus of push on NK activity,' CNN, May 15, 2006, <http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/asiapcf/05/18/nkorea.macau/index.html>

<sup>108</sup> Stephen Mihm, 'No Ordinary Counterfeit,' *The New York Times*, July 23, 2006.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Raphael F. Perl, 'Drug Trafficking and North Korea: Issues for U.S. Policy,' Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, December 5, 2003, pg. 8.



39' of the North Korean Communist Party and the profits went toward supporting elites and buying their allegiance, funding national security-related projects as well as purchasing WMD components.<sup>111</sup> Bureau 39's illegal transactions had accumulated as much as \$5 billion for the Kim Jong Il regime, according to reports in 2003.<sup>112</sup>

North Korea's capacity to resist through consolidation of the leadership was also helped by the introduction of some economic reforms. The Pyongyang regime sought to maintain internal stability through some limited economic progress to prevent a total collapse and to ensure protection against international sanctions.<sup>113</sup> Slowly, but steadily, moves were being made toward some sort of 'local make-shift economies' in the North, which would provide an income for the military.<sup>114</sup> Since the nineties, at least 2 million people died of starvation in the country, but the million-strong army has been taken care of through diversion of multilateral food aid.<sup>115</sup>

Thus, through these measures, Pyongyang tried to maintain domestic leadership which is a crucial element favoring success in coercive diplomacy. It was also a response to U.S. attempts to subvert its regime through financial sanctions. Thus, illegal economic activities and shoring up internal support were integrally related to coercive diplomacy. Hard-line demands as part of coercive diplomacy as well as firm positions on the nuclear issue were Kim's methods of consolidating domestic support amidst suspicions of internal discontent. But then, success in coercion also required a strong internal base otherwise, U.S. pressures would have subverted the regime and weakened Kim's position.

## Internal pressures in other states

North Korean intransigence was also a reflection of hard-line positions adopted by influential members of the Bush administration. Internal political factors within

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid, pp. 7-8.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Peter Hayes, 'Bush's Bipolar Disorder and the Looming Failure of Multilateral Talks With North Korea,' *Arms Control Today*, October 2003.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> D. McElroy, 'Millions of North Koreans face starvation – but army will be fed,' *The Telegraph*, October 28, 2001.

Washington's foreign policy and defense circles were an important factor in framing the administration's position on North Korea. The Bush administration took over in January 2001 following a bitter election battle with the Democratic presidential nominee, former Clinton Vice President Al Gore. Members of the Bush team were intensely critical of the Clinton era foreign policy, especially in dealing with the North Korean nuclear threat, which was termed as 'appeasement.'<sup>116</sup>

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld had, in fact, chaired a prominent commission on the ballistic missile threat, which concluded in 1998 that North Korea (as well as Iran and Iraq) could manufacture intercontinental ballistic missiles with WMD warheads within five years.<sup>117</sup> Rumsfeld, who became even more influential after the 9/11 attacks, had therefore already come into office with this kind of negative position. Further, Paul Wolfowitz, the deputy defense secretary in the Bush administration's first term was also a member of this commission. Thus important luminaries of the Bush team had negative views of North Korea's intentions and capabilities even during the Clinton period. Conservative commentators at that time saw in the above mentioned Rumsfeld report an implicit criticism of the Clinton administration's policy on the missile threat as well as of the perceived delay in introducing missile defense systems.<sup>118</sup>

Additionally, even within the administration there were disputes right from the beginning, between moderates led by Secretary of State Colin Powell and hardliners, including Defense Secretary Rumsfeld and Vice President Dick Cheney. By March 2001, Secretary Powell's approach of continuing the Clinton administration's engagement strategy had been rejected as President Bush rebuffed the visiting South Korean President, Kim Dae Jung's recommendation to continue discussions with DPRK.<sup>119</sup>

As late as a few months before the North Korean nuclear test, Bush administration officials repeated their criticism of Clinton's engagement strategy toward Pyongyang, and especially the 1994 Agreed Framework. In July 2005, White House Press Secretary Tony

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<sup>116</sup> Joshua Micah Marshall, 'Remaking the World: Bush and the Neoconservatives,' *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2003.

<sup>117</sup> Report of the Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States, July 15, 1998, <http://www.fas.org/irp/threat/bm-threat.htm>

<sup>118</sup> For example, Gary Schmitt, 'The Rumsfeld Commission and Ballistic Missile Defense,' Memorandum, Project for the New American Century, July 16, 1998, <http://www.newamericancentury.org/defjul1698.htm>

<sup>119</sup> Jim Lobe, 'Welcome to Bush's Hobbesian World,' *Asia Times*, March 13, 2001.

Snow termed the Clinton team's approach to the Kim regime as offering 'flowers and chocolates' apart from light water nuclear reactors.<sup>120</sup>

Apart from the U.S., internal political pressures in other concerned countries also conditioned their stance on the North Korean nuclear crisis. However, it must be noted that the general consensus among all Six-Party states (except North Korea) was that North Korea's nuclearization was an extremely dangerous possibility and needed to be avoided. While for Washington, the single, non-negotiable priority was nuclear rollback, the other actors had various domestic issues that qualified their positions on Pyongyang's nuclear program.

For Japan, the early period of the crisis (2002-03) also coincided with the emotive abduction issue. This concerned the fate of numerous Japanese citizens who were kidnapped by North Korea in the 1970s. Japanese public opinion was firmly of the view that the Tokyo government pursue investigations into the fate of the abductees.<sup>121</sup> At such a time, a compromise with North Korea would have been a disaster for any political group in Japan.<sup>122</sup> Tokyo's stated position on the North Korean nuclear issue was that a diplomatic framework was the desired policy. It must also be noted that while Tokyo maintained a hard-line stance against North Korea, it was almost wholly due to the abductee matter, rather than the nuclear dispute.<sup>123</sup> But Japanese domestic opinion was so strongly against Pyongyang that it was not possible for Tokyo to put forward any diplomatic initiatives to deal with the nuclear crisis.<sup>124</sup>

However, Japanese politicians who garnered domestic support by taking strong positions on the abductees issue (such as Shinzo Abe, who became prime minister after Junichiro Koizumi in October 2006) provoked nationalist sentiments that risked Japan's fragile ties with China and South Korea.<sup>125</sup> These nationalist sentiments were aroused in particular, by controversial visits by Japanese politicians, especially Prime Minister

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<sup>120</sup> White House Press Briefing, July 2005, <http://thinkprogress.org/2006/07/10/north-korea-clinton/>

<sup>121</sup> Katsu Furuwaka, 'Japan's View of the Korea Crisis,' Center for Nonproliferation Studies, February 25, 2003, <http://cns.miis.edu/research/korea/jpndprk.htm>

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> David C. Kang, 'Japan: U.S. Partner or Focused on Abductees?' *The Washington Quarterly*, Autumn 2005, 28:4, pg. 109.

<sup>124</sup> Katsu Furuwaka, 'Japan's View of the Korea Crisis.'

<sup>125</sup> Steven Vogel, 'Japan After Koizumi: The Abe Opportunity,' Brookings Northeast Asia Commentary, October 2006, <http://www.brook.edu/fp/cnaps/commentary/vogel20061001.htm>

Junichiro Koizumi, to the Yasukuni shrine, which commemorates the country's war dead and is frowned upon by Japan's neighbors, who see it as a reminder of Japan's role in the Second World War. Thus, long-standing disputes and mutual suspicion in Japan, South Korea and China served to provoke periodic distrust among these governments and, to a certain extent, undermined any united action that they could take against North Korean coercion.

But perhaps more importantly, the shrine visits aroused Pyongyang's anger also. After a January 2005 visit to the shrine by the then Japanese Premier Koizumi, North Korea slammed Japan's political establishment, and stated that, "it shows how frantically the ruling class is rushing toward a revival of militarism."<sup>126</sup> Earlier, a 2004 claim by Koizumi to the Dokdo/Takeshima islets had provoked Pyongyang, which alleged that this demonstrated Tokyo's growing militarism as well as its plans "for the re-invasion of Korea and the rest of Asia."<sup>127</sup>

Japanese domestic positions also highlighted other disputes with South Korea. In early 2005, the Japanese prefecture<sup>128</sup> of Shimane approved a bill designating an annual 'Takeshima Day' commemorating the disputed East Sea islands of Dokdo/Takeshima (Japanese and Korean names), which are claimed by both Japan and South Korea.<sup>129</sup> This led to a major outcry in South Korea and disrupted bilateral ties. South Korean analysts concluded that this was Tokyo's way of building up nationalistic feelings within Japan.<sup>130</sup> Soon after this episode, further controversy ensued when Beijing and Seoul complained vigorously about certain Japanese textbooks, which they said distorted Japan's historical role in the region.<sup>131</sup>

In South Korea, criticism by domestic audiences was not just reserved for Japan; the U.S. government was a frequent target. In 2002-03, the immediate provocation for anti-American protests within South Korea was the accidental deaths of two Korean girls by a U.S. military vehicle. The massive demonstrations that followed also called for the U.S. to

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<sup>126</sup> 'North Korea blasts visits by Koizumi to Yasukuni,' *The Japan Times*, January 4, 2005.

<sup>127</sup> Tom Tobback, 'North Korea: Japan prepares sanctions noose,' *Asia Times*, February 6, 2004, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Korea/FB06Dg01.html>

<sup>128</sup> 'Prefecture' is the rough equivalent of a district/county/province.

<sup>129</sup> Lee Joo-hee, 'Korea resolute on Dokdo sovereignty,' *Korea Now*, April 2, 2005, Vol. 34, No. 7, pp. 4-5.

<sup>130</sup> Choi Soung-ah, 'Koreans wary of Japan's intent,' *Korea Now*, April 2, 2005, Vol. 34, No. 7, pp. 8-9.

<sup>131</sup> Lee Joo-hee, 'Ban demands Japan revise textbooks,' *Korea Now*, April 16, 2005, Vol. 34, No. 8, pg. 4.

leave the country.<sup>132</sup> In large part, such calls reflected a growing sentiment among average South Koreans that Pyongyang was no longer a dangerous threat.<sup>133</sup>

The North Korean nuclear crisis also coincided in 2005 with the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Japanese colonization of the Korean peninsula as well as the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of Japanese occupation.<sup>134</sup> The government of President Roh Moo-Hyun raked up nationalist issues by questioning the role of post South Korean leaders alleged to be collaborators.<sup>135</sup> Though such debates were seen as an attempt to gain domestic popularity, they inevitably negatively affected ties with Japan.<sup>136</sup>

While China was a key interlocutor with North Korea, it had its own internal priorities that colored its overall position. The prospect of millions of refugees streaming into China in the event of a crisis was a sobering thought for Chinese policymakers. Apart from this, increasingly, the northeastern provinces of China bordering North Korea benefited greatly from cross border trade after years of economic decline in that area.<sup>137</sup> Experts stated that this economic activity was crucial for the economic regeneration of northeastern China and therefore it would influence Beijing's reactions to Pyongyang's nuclear plans.<sup>138</sup> It must also be noted that for the Chinese government, maintaining internal stability in the face of disparate economic growth in a growing population has been of utmost importance. Therefore, issues such North Korean refugees and economic growth in border areas of China potentially impact on millions of citizens, and therefore have been of crucial importance to Beijing.

The significance here is that domestic controversies and debates were an important factor that prevented Japan, China and South Korea from presenting a united stance to deter Pyongyang's threats. It does not mean that these were the *main* factors, but undoubtedly contributed to the general tone of the reactions of these three countries toward

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<sup>132</sup> Balbina Y. Hwang, 'Defusing Anti-American Rhetoric in South Korea,' Heritage Foundation Backgrounder #1619, January 23, 2003, <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Asiaandthepacific/bg1619.cfm>

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> 'Northeast Asia's Undercurrents of Conflict,' International Crisis Group, Asia Report No. 108, [http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/108\\_north\\_east\\_asia\\_s\\_undercurrents\\_of\\_conflict.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/108_north_east_asia_s_undercurrents_of_conflict.pdf) December 15, 2005, pg. 21.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Christopher Hughes, 'China's interests go well beyond the nuclear issue,' *The Guardian*, October 23, 2006.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

Pyongyang. It meant that the united front that Washington desired for pressurizing and isolating North Korea was also absent. Domestic forces, especially in Japan, that persuaded politicians to periodically adopt controversial positions (such as territorial claims and shrine visits) provided North Korea an additional lever with which to build its case, and divide its supposedly united adversaries.

## Implications:

### **How did these internal factors impact on the respective positions of the parties in the coercive diplomacy equation?**

The Bush administration's first term was marked by the dominance of conservative hawks in foreign policymaking. Further, since the 2000 presidential election, Bush's views on foreign policy were guided by an 'Anything but Clinton' mantra, with claims that his predecessor's policy was 'action without vision, activity without priority and missions without end – an approach that squanders American well and drains American energy.'<sup>139</sup> According to one anonymous expert involved in North Korean policymaking during the Bush administration, "Their A.B.C. approach – 'Anything but Clinton' - led to these problems."<sup>140</sup>

A good example of the politicization of North Korea policy came in January 2003, when New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson, who had negotiated with Pyongyang for the Clinton administration, held discussions with North Korean diplomats. However, the Bush administration refused to utilize his services. In the words, of Charles Pritchard, who was the State Department's special envoy on North Korea in the Bush administration's first term, "the North Koreans were grasping for straws, looking for any friendly face. But they forgot to do the math. Richardson was a Democrat, a Clinton guy. No way would Bush have anything to do with him."<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Ivo H. Daalder & James M. Lindsay, 'The Bush Revolution: The Remaking of America's Foreign Policy,' The Brookings Institution, May 2003, pg. 8, [http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/about/pdfs/bush\\_revolution.pdf](http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/about/pdfs/bush_revolution.pdf)

<sup>140</sup> Quoted in Nicholas D. Kristoff, 'N. Korea, 6, and Bush, 0,' *The New York Times*, April 26, 2005.

<sup>141</sup> Fred Kaplan, 'Rolling Blunder,' *The Washington Monthly*, May 2004, <http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2004/0405.kaplan.html>

Therefore, there was an instinctive disgust in the Bush administration toward any Clintonesque conciliatory moves that might have offered some concession to Pyongyang in exchange for simultaneous denuclearization. Thus, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the rigidity of the 'CVID first, negotiations later' mantra of the Bush administration came about partly due to the disdain for the Clinton administration's 'appeasement' and supposed failure to pursue a more assertive approach against Pyongyang in the 1990s. Thus, the dispute over CVID, which constituted a significant lack of clarity of settlement, was, to a certain extent, brought on by rigid domestic positions taken by the Bush administration. It only reinforced the suspicion in North Korea that regime change was the ultimate objective of the Bush administration.

Regarding the other domestic issues mentioned in the above section, internal political complications, especially in Japan and South Korea served to undermine resistance to North Korean demands. Indeed, this was even recognized by policymakers there. In January 2004, for example, the South Korean ambassador to Japan regretted Japanese Premier Koizumi's visit to the Yasukuni shrine and stated that it could harm bilateral collaboration on the North Korean nuclear issue.<sup>142</sup>

The important analytical point here is that domestic political compulsions caused mutual suspicions among the Six-Party allies, which detracted from a united resistance to Pyongyang. International support is an important variable favoring success in coercive diplomacy. However, while Pyongyang did not have any significant international support for its demands, there was no united international opposition against it either. And as the next section demonstrates, Pyongyang was then able to extract significant concessions from them. These domestic constraints on CD are summarized in the following table.

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<sup>142</sup> 'S. Korea envoy reiterates regret over Koizumi's Yasukuni visit,' Asian Political News, January 12, 2004.

<b><u>Internal factors</u></b>	<b>Coercive Diplomacy consequence</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- North Korea's need to shore up the regime</li> <li>- Domestic compulsions in Japan and South Korea</li> <li>- Bush administration followed an 'Anything But Clinton' policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Led to high demands</li> <li>- Led to integration of nuclear option with military, leading to increased coercive threats to other regional actors</li> <li>- Involvement in illegal economic activities to provide financing for military and elites → allowed resistance to American pressure.</li> <li>- Lack of united resistance to North Korean threats and demands.</li> <li>- Led to rigid stand on CVID – hampered clarity of settlement</li> </ul>

**Table 20: North Korean case: Internal factors**

## **INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT**

While Washington attempted multilateral isolation of North Korea it was clear that this pressure was not overwhelming enough for Pyongyang to consider reducing its demands. Apart from the U.S. and North Korea, the four other states in the Six-Party Talks had their own agendas and attitudes on how the crisis could be resolved.<sup>143</sup> This shows that multilateral dynamics in coercive diplomacy can complicate the situation further, especially when the interests and priorities of allies and other concerned parties do not coincide. Lack of support from allies and other regional players hampered Washington's position because it eased the pressure on Pyongyang as well its isolation. For one thing, the image of a possible war turning into a nuclear flashpoint was too catastrophic to contemplate, not just for the U.S., but also for regional actors. Thus, while the U.S. resisted all of North Korea's demands throughout the crisis, Pyongyang was able to achieve several of its objectives through other regional actors. This was a crucial factor that hampered Washington's resistance.

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<sup>143</sup> See John S. Park, 'Inside Multilateralism: The Six-Party Talks,' *The Washington Quarterly*, 28:4, pp. 75-91.



For the regional actors, economics played a major role, especially the increase in economic ties between Pyongyang and its neighbors through restricted economic zones. Commercial projects such as the Kaesong Industrial Park which had been set up in North Korea just short of its border with the South, employed up to 2,000 workers from the North.<sup>144</sup> This partnership which produced consumer items was part of multi-million dollar investments by the South Korean government. It was symbolic of the deeper economic ties that three members of the Six-Party Talks – South Korea, China, and Russia – developed with North Korea. According to official South Korean figures, during the first two years of the nuclear crisis (2002-04), Pyongyang's foreign trade jumped 20 percent, going from \$2.5 billion in 2002 to \$3.5 billion in 2004.<sup>145</sup> With both Russia and China, North Korea's trade levels doubled during the same period. These investments in some specified areas in North Korea were part of an attempt to draw the Stalinist regime into a stabilizing regional economic relationship. Instead of increasing pressure by applying economic sanctions, regional actors rejected this approach.

Furthermore, in South Korea, a policy favoring conciliation with the North combined with an anti-American feeling domestically, ruled out endorsing the use of force or its threat.<sup>146</sup> Since 1998, under the newly elected President Kim Dae Jung, Seoul pursued a 'sunshine policy,' to promote better ties between the North and South. That policy had been committed to ensuring the survival of the Pyongyang regime. It entailed economic and political concessions to the North in the belief that it would lead to reciprocal moves from the latter.<sup>147</sup> The eventual concessions that Seoul hoped for involved dismantling of Pyongyang's WMD arsenal. But in the more immediate term, South Korea's sunshine policy was also been driven by the need to avoid an invasion by a desperate North.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Anthony Faiola, 'Despite U.S. Attempts, N. Korea Anything but Isolated,' *The Washington Post*, May 12, 2005.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> P.S. Goodman & J. Cho, 'Anti-U.S. Sentiment Deepens in S. Korea,' *The Washington Post*, January 9, 2003

<sup>147</sup> Nicholas Eberstadt, 'North Korea: Beyond Appeasement,' in Robert Kagan & William Kristol (ed.) *Present Dangers*, (San Francisco, CA: Encounter Books, 2000), pg. 152.

<sup>148</sup> U. Heo and C. Hyun, 'The 'Sunshine' Policy Revisited: An Analysis of South Korea's Policy toward North Korea,' in U. Heo & S. A. Horowitz (ed) *Conflict in Asia*, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), pg. 96.

These burgeoning economic and political ties reduced the efficacy of multilateral coercion championed by the U.S. International support is a key element of coercive diplomacy because it bestows political legitimacy on the coercer's actions and also assists logistically in pressurizing the target state. It also highlights the problem of coalitional coercive diplomacy, which is generally fragile because of the relative difficulty of maintaining a united sense of purpose.

Economic activities also highlighted the growing involvement of South Korean economic conglomerates in impacting on North Korea's interaction with regional actors. Hyundai Asan, the South Korea firm operated a highly profitable tourist venture at Mount Kumgang, that earned Pyongyang almost \$500 million between 1998 and 2005.<sup>149</sup> These ventures brought in much needed legal revenue for North Korea, and helped bolster the regime by decreasing its isolation.

A crucial role was played by the Chinese government in the crisis. For Beijing, stability in the region is of paramount importance and therefore it concluded that this goal would not be furthered by North Korea's nuclear program as well as objectives of regime change. China's top priority has been to maintain its high economic growth and therefore, it had to pressurize Pyongyang to make some concessions. China attempted to capitalize on its close ties with Pyongyang in order to jump start negotiations at several points since 2002. However, Beijing's pressure was limited to getting North Korea to the negotiating table. It tacitly opposed the broader unilateralist trend in U.S. foreign policy that raised the perception that regime change might be the ultimate objective against Pyongyang. Beijing preferred to base negotiations on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence which were introduced by China, India and Myanmar (then Burma) in 1954 and which stress non-interference in the internal affairs of another country.<sup>150</sup>

While China did not entirely oppose U.S. demands, it sought to moderate them by lessening the perception of regime change agendas. Beijing rejected most coercive

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<sup>149</sup> Barbara Demick, 'Coastal Resort Brings Hard Currency to North Korea,' *The Los Angeles Times*, August 2, 2005.

<sup>150</sup> Anne Wu, 'What China Whispers to North Korea,' *The Washington Quarterly*, Spring 2005, pg. 41.

measures that included economic sanctions as well as regime change objectives, and sought arrangements that would deal with North Korea's security needs.<sup>151</sup>

One of the most prominent U.S. demands it rejected was in May 2005, under which Beijing would have halted the supply of oil to North Korea until it returned to the negotiating table.<sup>152</sup> In 2003, China had reportedly shut down the oil pipeline to the North (Pyongyang imports all its oil) for three days, but U.S. officials doubted that this was related to the nuclear crisis, especially because China was able to get North Korea to join the peace talks through financial incentives.<sup>153</sup> This highlights another major problem of multilateral coercion – North Korea's strategy of playing of one party against the other. But getting from China what the U.S. refused to provide, Pyongyang was able to poke holes in the multilateral isolation framework.

A major source of worry for both China and South Korea was the effect of instability in North Korea. Both South Korea and China wanted to avoid a destabilizing collapse of North Korea that would send millions of refugees streaming into their borders, creating a humanitarian disaster that would overwhelm their governments and create massive law and order problems. In recent years Beijing had been plagued by huge inflows of refugees from North Korea,<sup>154</sup> which had been a political and diplomatic problem. A longer term issue for Beijing was the pattern of U.S. activity in the region. Taiwan is one of the biggest irritants in Sino-American relations, and any attempts by the U.S. to force a solution on the Korean peninsula would be perceived as setting a precedent for similar action vis-à-vis Taiwan.<sup>155</sup>

China also saw the North Korean nuclear issue in terms of eventual reunification of the two Koreas, and it was extremely doubtful if it would be comfortable with a nuclear-armed Korea. North Korea has played an important buffer role between the Chinese mainland and South Korea for more than half a century. China's concern is the long-standing deployment of U.S. troops in the South. If the North Korean regime collapsed and

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<sup>151</sup> Hui Zhang, 'North Korean Denuclearization: A Chinese view of the Way Forward,' *Disarmament Diplomacy*, Issue 82, Spring 2006.

<sup>152</sup> Glenn Kessler, 'China Rejected U.S. Suggestion to Cut off Oil to Pressure North Korea,' *The Washington Post*, May 7, 2005.

<sup>153</sup> Glenn Kessler, 'China Rejected U.S. Suggestion to Cut off Oil to Pressure North Korea.'

<sup>154</sup> J. Liu, 'Porous China Border Tempts North Korean Refugees,' *The Washington Post*, May 17, 2004

<sup>155</sup> Peter Hayes, 'Bush's Bipolar Disorder and the Looming Failure of Multilateral Talks With North Korea.'

led to reunification (whether peaceful or otherwise) it would in all probability lead to the deployment of U.S. troops there. Even if U.S. forces were not deployed in the North, a unified Korea would mean the extension of U.S. influence up to the Yalu River.<sup>156</sup> Beijing's attitudes toward this crisis are therefore related to China's broader strategic goal of reducing U.S. influence in the region. Beyond a point, Beijing wanted to place hurdles in Washington's goal of increasing coercion on North Korea. According to one expert who has visited Pyongyang several times, Selig Harrison, "the most important (priority) in Chinese calculations is to forestall a war by keeping the United States engaged in six-party negotiations with North Korea of indefinite duration."<sup>157</sup>

However, Beijing also understood the serious regional implications of North Korea's nuclear weapon program. North Korea's nuclear breakout would have the result of boosting the nuclear weapon programs of all major states in the region – Japan, South Korea, and even Taiwan. Such a development would be contrary to China's desire for regional stability and therefore, while it opposed U.S. coercive military activity, Beijing also wanted a nuclear weapon-free Korean peninsula.

Thus, the priority order for China and South Korea was different from that of Washington. In fact, in February 2003, a senior foreign policy aide to South Korean President-elect Roh Moo Hyun stated that the new government would rather see Pyongyang with nuclear weapons than see the regime's collapse.<sup>158</sup> Furthermore, the new South Korean President's view was that North Korea was merely using nuclear weapons as a bargaining chip and if economic assistance and regime security were promised to Pyongyang, it would give up its nuclear weapons. This was a clear fundamental difference from the U.S. position that Pyongyang needed to commit to a verifiable nuclear rollback plan, before negotiations on an overall deal could take place.

Washington's closest ally in the Six-Party Talks framework had been Japan, but while Tokyo's objective was also nuclear rollback of North Korea, its strategy for achieving this objective differs from the U.S. approach.<sup>159</sup> It has offered Pyongyang

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<sup>156</sup> Erich Marquardt, 'US struggles to place pressure on N Korea,' PINR, March 23, 2005.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Chae-Jin Lee, *A Troubled Peace: U.S. Policy and the Two Koreas*, pg. 227.

<sup>159</sup> James Clay Moltz & C. Kenneth Quinones, 'Getting Serious About a Multilateral Approach to North Korea,' *The Nonproliferation Review*, Spring 2004, pp. 141-142.

substantial economic benefits including \$10 billion in aid as well as membership of the Asian Development Bank, in return for verifiable disarmament. Despite lack of progress on this front, Tokyo has enjoyed period of upswing in its relations with North Korea. This was reflected in Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's first visit to the country in 2002. After a second visit in 2004, North Korea released several Japanese citizens who had been kidnapped by Pyongyang's agents decades ago.

However, these developments do not imply that Japan has not considered aggressive measures. Tokyo has steadily increased its participation in the missile defense system, and has sought to develop its missile capability as well as aircraft capability to strike nuclear installations in North Korea.<sup>160</sup> The point here is that while U.S. allies were willing to adopt a carrot and stick approach, the U.S. was unwavering in its multilateral coercion policy which did not involve any concessions till Pyongyang conceded on denuclearization.

Russian involvement in the crisis also demonstrates the problem of multilateral isolation. Moscow also visualized the regional instability (mentioned earlier) and domino effect of nuclear weaponization that would come about as a result of North Korea acquiring nuclear weapons. Therefore, in January 2003, Russia independently offered its own proposal to resolve the crisis, which centered around: (1) a nuclear free Korean peninsula, (2) implementing international agreements, (3) security guarantees for North Korea, and (4) resumption of humanitarian and economic cooperation.<sup>161</sup> However, these plans were rejected by both North Korea and the U.S., with the latter ruling out any security guarantees in exchange for nuclear rollback.

While Moscow agreed with the U.S. objective of denuclearization, it also provided food aid to North Korea in 2004 in the form of 35,000 tons of wheat.<sup>162</sup> But Russia also had a less strategic agenda under which it would have supplied hydroelectric plants to replace the Korean Energy Development Organization (KEDO)-supplied nuclear reactors.

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<sup>160</sup> See for example, James Brooke, 'Japan's New Military Focus: China and North Korea Threats,' *The New York Times*, December 11, 2004.

<sup>161</sup> Yoshinori Takeda, 'Putin's foreign policy toward North Korea,' *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, (2006), Vol. 6, No. 2, pg. 201.

<sup>162</sup> James Clay Moltz, 'U.S.-Russian Relations and the North Korean Crisis,' *Asian Survey*, Vol. 45, Issue 2, pg. 726.

Russia's interest also lay in establishing transport and energy links to South Korea through the North which would open up new markets.<sup>163</sup>

These examples therefore demonstrate that even though all parties involved in negotiations with Pyongyang agreed on the goal – denuclearization – they differed with the U.S. on providing concessions. The problem of multilateral coercion brings forth a key issue – prioritizing objectives in a coalition. Even in unilateral coercive diplomacy, such a goal is difficult to achieve. After 9/11, the U.S. faced several security objectives – Afghanistan, Iraq, and North Korea, though not necessarily in that order – which was the key dilemma. If pressure is applied on a state multilaterally, the problem is exacerbated. Each side in the Six-Party Framework had its own agenda. For example, China and South Korea, being neighbors of North Korea have been concerned about possible refugee flows, an issue that Washington has appreciated, but to which it (the U.S.) did not give as much importance. Such a diversion of objectives in the coalition then filters down to the means being adopted and this affects joint coercive activity.

## Implications:

### **How did the international strategic environment impact on coercive diplomacy?**

North Korea was able to achieve several of its demands through regional actors in Northeast Asia. While the U.S. was steadfast in its refusal to negotiate, other Six Party members were of the view that an engagement strategy was the best option. Therefore, these actors offered Pyongyang economic incentives to desist from brinkmanship. In this manner, North Korea's coercive diplomacy partly succeeded, but not against the U.S.

This engagement strategy by North Korea's neighbors shows an interesting dimension to the coercive process. North Korea's brinkmanship was aimed at more than one target, which then increased the possibility of at least some concessions from one or more actors. It demonstrated the benefits of maintaining some ambiguity in terms of demands for the coercer. If North Korea had very specific demands (apart from economic and food aid) directed at one particular state, the others would not have had any incentive to offer any concessions. Therefore, in this case the relative lack of clarity of objectives

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

worked to a certain extent for the coercer (North Korea). The following table summarizes the arguments in this section:

<b><u>International Strategic Environment</u></b>	<b>Coercive diplomacy</b>
<b>Argument</b>  U.S. goal of multilateral coercion was not adhered to by other parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduced isolation of North Korea</li> <li>- Provided economic support to Pyongyang</li> <li>- Brought some success for North Korean coercive diplomacy. But CD did not succeed against U.S.</li> </ul>

## CONCLUSION

As this chapter demonstrates, clarity of settlement conditions is an important element in the conduct of coercive diplomacy. In general, clarity of settlement is a condition that has to be satisfied for the target state. Because this case also involved counter-threats from the U.S., reassurances in terms of settlement conditions was a crucial point for the main coercer, Pyongyang.

The importance of reassurances in this case was two-fold. First, reassurances, at least from the U.S. would have contributed to an increased clarity of settlement conditions by lessening mistrust, and allowing either simultaneous CVID/economic aid and U.S. security guarantees, or might have allowed one side to fulfill its side of the bargain first. Second, and relatedly, because of Pyongyang's high threat perceptions of possible Type C regime change coercive diplomacy by Washington, a reassurance by the Bush administration would have been a major confidence building mechanism. It would have reassured Pyongyang (to some extent anyway) that any U.S. demands were limited to behavior change (Type B CD) rather than regime change (Type C CD).

This chapter spells out two main problems of coercive diplomacy. First, is the perception in the target state that Type C coercive diplomacy is the ultimate objective, rather than just rollback of the nuclear weapons program. This raises the stakes for the target state and makes it more determined to resist. In the process it also makes it more

difficult for the coercer to carry out the lesser Type B coercion – rollback of an action the target state has embarked upon or behavior change. Second, this chapter demonstrates a key problem of multilateral coercive diplomacy – differing agendas of the coalition which makes it difficult to maintain unity of purpose as well as a consensus on the methods to achieving the desired objective.

Crucially, it also shows that in circumstances when the coercer is pressurizing several targets at the same time (as North Korea did), it becomes correspondingly easier to get some concessions out of at least one of them, especially if they do not present a united front. In this particular case, domestic issues within the East Asian states cause friction among them and that made it even more difficult to present a united resistance to Pyongyang's coercion and brinkmanship.

The post nuclear test developments in Northeast Asia also highlight the importance of modification and hierarchy of objectives. While, prior to the nuclear test, the U.S. was firm in its refusal to link separate issues such as denuclearization and North Korea's criminal networks, after the test, in an attempt to facilitate talks, Washington reportedly hinted at a hierarchy of objectives. Through this approach, it was reportedly ready to negotiate over the anti-money laundering and counterfeiting actions taken by the U.S. against North Korean entities. But in return, Pyongyang would have to take some immediate measures to dismantle nuclear equipment. This was clearly a shift from the rigid 'CVID first' principle, and showed the potential benefits of carrots in coercion.

In the last two years, especially since 2005, U.S. government agencies increasingly clamped down on illegal economic activities originating from the North Korean regime. These measures have included sanctioning banks (such as Banco Delta Asia in Macau) for aiding North Korea's money laundering and counterfeiting activities. Such aggressive activities by the U.S. also led to sanctioning European companies accused of assisting in Pyongyang's WMD proliferation efforts. While the U.S. was focused on North Korea's criminal activities for about three years now, after 2005 it became an integral part of the overall policy of applying pressure against Pyongyang. We can therefore speculate that because of the failure of U.S. pressure tactics and isolation policy from 2002 onwards, Washington concentrated on another avenue to apply pressure on Kim Jong Il. According to some reliable sources the objective here was to clamp down on key revenue sources of



the Pyongyang elites which would then act as a catalyst for the regime to collapse internally.<sup>164</sup> It is clear that it had to be seen as part of a continuum of evolving U.S. policies toward North Korea.

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<sup>164</sup> Christian Caryl, 'Pocketbook Policing,' *Newsweek*, April 10-17, 2006, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/12114822/site/newsweek/>

<b>Factors affecting coercive diplomacy</b>	<b>Consequence</b>
<b>U.S. Objectives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Denuclearization</li> <li>- But no carrots/concessions</li> </ul> <b>North Korean Objectives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Humanitarian aid</li> <li>- Removal from terrorism and sanctions list</li> <li>- Direct talks</li> </ul>	<p>Prevented clarity of objectives, high magnitude of demands from both sides.</p> <p>Detracted from international support for U.S.</p>
<b>Perceptions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kim's perception that regime change was the main agenda</li> </ul>	<p>Therefore, insistence on direct talks that would involve security guarantees.</p> <p>But there were no security reassurances from the U.S.</p>
<b>Credibility of U.S. threats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extension of U.S. forces</li> <li>- Unclear if nuclear, chemical and missile sites can be destroyed before escalation</li> </ul>	<p>Image of war against the U.S., as well as regional allies.</p>
<b>Internal factors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kim's need to consolidate control over military</li> <li>- View that a member from outside the family would be acceptable.</li> <li>- Military's view that some one from its fold should rule.</li> <li>- Domestic upheavals in Six Party allies in Northeast Asia.</li> </ul>	<p>Kim's integration of nuclear option more firmly with military.</p> <p>Also led to more nationalistic, coercive threats by DPRK</p> <p>Failure by Six Party allies to put up a united front.</p>
<b>International Strategic Environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Other parties (China, Russia, South Korea, Japan) agreed on objective of denuclearization but disputed over means.</li> <li>- Other states offered economic cooperation to Pyongyang</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- International support not in favor of U.S.</li> <li>- No complete isolation of North Korea.</li> <li>- Shows problem of multilateral/coalitional coercion</li> <li>- Resulted in some success in DPRK coercive diplomacy</li> </ul>

**Table 21: North Korean case: Summary of arguments**

## **6.0 CONCLUSION – COERCIVE DIPLOMACY SINCE 9/11**

### **Introduction**

This dissertation has tried to further the field of coercive diplomacy by analyzing recent cases of its application. In general, the model explains the course taken by the actors in each case effectively, demonstrating the continuing relevance of this concept. In the following pages I address some of the substantive conclusions derived from these studies. Prior to that, a brief summary of the case conclusions would help put the issues in perspective.

As is obvious, all cases focus on the continuing influence of the United States in contemporary politics. Three of the cases focused on this issue directly, while in the fourth the U.S. was an important mediator which encouraged the disputing parties to back down. The peculiarities of each case are by no means unique. Characteristics such as the presence of nuclear weapons in the coercer and/or target state, state sponsorship of terrorist groups, defective state control over non-state actors, are present in many other cases where coercive diplomacy can be potentially applied.

### **Case Summaries**

The four cases studied in this dissertation have brought up diverse consequences on the conduct of coercive diplomacy. While these effects are elaborated later in this chapter, it is useful to consider these cases again.

The South Asia case demonstrated the impact on coercion of a high magnitude of objectives which struck at the target's national interests. The chances of coercion were further limited by the presence of nuclear weapons in the target state. Fearing an adverse

impact on other strategic imperatives (war on terror) the U.S. stepped in to facilitate a compromise and to secure some reassurances for India from Islamabad. The subsequent modification of objectives, which was endorsed by members of the international community (in their role as ‘facilitators’ rather than ‘spoilers’) then enabled New Delhi to end its coercive policy.

The Taliban case demonstrated the pitfalls of perceptions that lead to (a) an assumption in the target state that Type C CD was in progress, and (b) an incorrect assessment of the target’s preference ordering by the coercer. It also demonstrated the pernicious effects (from the coercer’s perspective) of spoilers acting in their own capacity, and subverting their own government’s support to the coercer.

On the other hand, high expectations of assistance from spoilers allowed Saddam Hussein to be reassured, when the coercer had not actually offered any such reassurances. Defective threat perceptions on the part of Saddam, coupled with Washington’s inability to properly make the case for war as well as its inefficient and politicized policy-planning ensured the failure of this coercive episode, which was also characterized by a high magnitude of objectives.

The North Korean case showed how, through brinkmanship coercive diplomacy, Pyongyang was able to extract some concessions while retaining its nuclear arsenal which can conceivably continue to be used for future coercion. It is also an example of how a regime essentially used coercion to achieve some security in the absence of unambiguous reassurances from the primary adversary, the U.S. This is also a case which showed that coercing more than one target can sometimes yield rewards from some of them.

## **Coercive diplomacy and WMD**

As the South Asia and North Korea cases demonstrated, the presence of weapons of mass destruction in the target state, (whether of the chemical, nuclear, or biological variety) can decrease the credibility of the coercer’s threats, reducing the chances of successful coercive diplomacy. This might lead one to conclude that such a realization would help cool down tensions as the adversaries realize the futility of coercion. On the one hand this

view is plausible, given that in the four years after Operation Parakram, New Delhi did not attempt further coercive moves against Pakistan, despite several serious terrorist incidents.

But on the other hand, the Indian military is now introducing newer war-fighting strategies, such as the 'Cold Start' doctrine, which seeks to execute quick, decisive operations, whether through an armored thrust or by destroying terrorist camps across the border, before Pakistan has a chance to react. India sees this as a way of getting around the reality of nuclear deterrence and the failure of coercive diplomacy by relying increasingly on a conventional strategy. However, given Pakistan's conventional military weakness it is not certain that Islamabad would allow the conflict to be restricted to a conventional level if it faces an outright defeat. Therefore, in the South Asian context at least, the failure of coercive diplomacy has not only had positive developments favoring negotiations but also has led to the introduction of more war fighting strategies, which are ostensibly 'flexible,' but in reality might make full-scale war in the subcontinent more likely.

Similarly, in the North Korean case, after the failure of coercion in the first two years of the crisis, the U.S. concentrated on other avenues of coercing Pyongyang by going after its sources of criminal profits, which would increase dissatisfaction among the regime's elites because those profits are an important source of income for them.

A key lesson of the North Korea study is also that in cases where an adversary pursues WMD capability, coercive diplomacy is naturally easier early on rather than later on in the target's progression toward WMD capability. Indeed, one of the drawbacks of coercive diplomacy is that the Iraq war as well as the Indian-Pakistan crisis of 2002-03, provided examples of the potency of WMD threats against coercion. States such as Iran and North Korea have learned this lesson well. In fact, the North Korea episode shows that it is possible to use nuclear weapons (as well as other WMD) in order to coerce adversaries into delivering concessions, especially economic and energy related items. In this particular case, the threat did not involve an actual attack but merely the threat to develop the capability which could one day effectively threaten the target (U.S.). But in the process no credible assurances are offered by North Korea that its nuclear program is being reversed, because, with the rewards it can extract, there is a no real incentive to denuclearize.

## Multiple Objectives

Each of the case studies highlighted the importance of framing objectives in coercive diplomacy. More specifically, the cases reiterate that the higher the magnitude of objectives the more difficult successful CD becomes. In the South Asia case study, the Indian government put forth a formal list of demands that ranged from the complete cessation of state-sponsored terrorism from Pakistan to the surrender of militants wanted by New Delhi. Apart from this a major implicit objective was to gain U.S. support. Similarly, in the Iraq case, Washington had several objectives (stopping WMD acquisition, terrorism, democracy) which required Type C coercive diplomacy. While the objectives mattered less in the Iraq case than Saddam's faulty perceptions and international factors, it would not be unreasonable to suggest that if Saddam Hussein had perceived U.S. objectives and threats correctly the high magnitude of U.S. demands and Type C coercive diplomacy would have led to resistance to coercion anyway.

These conclusions mainly show the negative impact of multiple objectives on coercive diplomacy. But the South Asia case study also showed how modifying objectives by playing up the significance of the Kashmir election allowed New Delhi to end coercion. It does not mean that coercive diplomacy (as defined by the original demands) was necessarily successful, but in fact, suggests that by choosing a lesser objective, the coercer can help deflect international and domestic attention from the inability to get the target to concede to the primary demands. Thus, even with multiple objectives, the manner in which the objectives are presented and framed can help the coercer, especially if it is attempting to end the stand-off with, at the very least, ambiguous results.

Therefore, in this sense, multiple objectives can be advantageous for the coercer. If there is one unambiguous objective of the coercer, failure invites a loss of reputation because the lack of success is stark. On the other hand, with more than one objective, it is possible for the coercer to pick one and maintain some ambiguity over the final result of the standoff. A recent example was the reported statement by a North Korean official after the October 2006 nuclear test that Pyongyang would be willing to return to the Six Party Talks if Washington agreed to help resolve the confrontation over Pyongyang's criminal

activities, such as counterfeiting and money laundering.<sup>1</sup> This was obviously a major climb down from other demands such as extraction of economic benefits and direct talks and peace treaty with the U.S. It is an example of how, by choosing a lesser objective, a state can attempt to seek a way out of the standoff.

## **The problem of Type C coercive diplomacy**

The cases in the dissertation have involved explicit, implicit, or perceived (by target) objectives of regime change in the adversary. Such an objective is regarded as the most difficult variant of coercive diplomacy because it increases the stakes of the target and either balances the asymmetry of interests or leaves it unfavorable for the coercer.

In this dissertation, a crucial issue is how perceptions can condition the way one state views the other's objectives. It can also lead to a disconnect in the way the coercer and the target view the coercer's objectives. Thus, in the South Asia and the Taliban cases, while the coercer (India, U.S., respectively) did not overtly aim for regime change CD, the perception in the targets (Pakistan, Taliban, respectively) was that eventually successful coercion would threaten the ruling regimes. In the case of the Musharraf regime, if major concessions were made to New Delhi, it would have further angered fundamentalist elements in the military as well as the religious parties. In the Taliban case, U.S. assistance to the Northern Alliance would eventually have overthrown the Taliban. More crucially, ambiguous statements by the Bush administration did not dispel the Taliban's conviction that regime change was the actual objective. Thus, in these cases the coercer's calculations of the consequences of its threats and objectives did not match what the target concluded the objectives would lead to.

In terms of modification of objectives, a crucial issue is whether the coercer is willing to accept a lesser objective of behavior change (Type B) instead of regime change (Type C). A key analytical question here is whether the coercer believes that only through regime change in the target can it (the coercer) achieve behavior change. Therefore, if behavior change is crucial to the coercer it can renounce regime change in order to increase

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<sup>1</sup> Jae-Song Chang, 'North Korea said to be willing to talk,' Yahoo News, October 23, 2006.

the chances of the target changing its behavior. It means that the coercer would have to move back from Type C coercive diplomacy to Type B (target has to undo an action) or Type A (target has to stop short of a goal).

A further point that the South Asia case raised is that in some instances the coercer might not want regime change in the target state. During Operation Parakram, New Delhi did not aim to dislodge Gen. Musharraf as the ruler of Pakistan, i.e., regime change was not India's objective. An influential view in India has been that only a military ruler in Islamabad can deliver any concessions, whether under threat of military attack or through negotiations. Conversely, a replacement government, either a weak democracy or a fundamentalist regime would be a bigger threat to New Delhi. Therefore, in such cases, while the coercer desires a change in the policies of the target, it (the coercer) might not want regime change as such an objective would be counter-productive. Therefore, while making threats and in formulating demands, the coercer has to ensure that the pressure is not overwhelming enough for regime change to take place in the target due to domestic dissatisfaction there. To prevent such a scenario, the role of assurances and carrots is crucial.

### **Spoilers in coercive diplomacy**

An important element in all four case studies is the role that third parties (e.g., actors apart from the coercer and the target) played in the coercive process, mainly by weakening and undermining coercion. In the South Asia case, the U.S. stepped in to prevent escalation of coercive diplomacy by India into all-out war. But in the process, Washington also enabled New Delhi to limit and modify its objectives by reframing the issue and playing up the importance of elections in Kashmir, while simultaneously pressuring Islamabad to make public concessions. Therefore, while Washington was initially a spoiler in India's coercive policy, eventually it helped New Delhi seek a way out of the stalemate and took on the role of a 'facilitator.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this analysis, a 'facilitator' can be defined as any third party that enables or assists in the coercer's objectives, or acts as a catalyst for a peaceful settlement that allows the coercer to retain its reputation.



In the Taliban case study, while some parties (the Musharraf regime, Russia, some Central Asian states) played an important logistical and political role in building up the American military threat against the Taliban, other parties (religious and military leaders within Pakistan) helped bolster the Taliban's resistance by disrupting effective communication and signaling of threats and by assisting the Taliban militarily. This second category of third parties therefore played the role of spoilers in the coercive process. In the Iraq case, Saddam's perceptions of the intentions of third parties (Russia, France, and Germany) helped lessen the credibility of U.S. coercive policy in the period before the invasion. As it turned out, these perceptions were faulty, as Russia and France did not intervene adequately to stop the U.S. attack. The third potential spoiler in this case, Germany, in fact, offered surreptitious support to the U.S. The reasoning behind such a 'betrayal' was probably to maintain some ties with the U.S., while outwardly maintaining their reputations for independence by opposing the Iraq war, politically and diplomatically. This underscores the point that intentions and capabilities of potential spoilers are a crucial element in the extent to their interference in the coercive process.

In the final case, North Korea, the U.S. objective of multilateral coercion was not fully accepted by regional powers – China, South Korea, Japan, and Russia. They played spoilers to Washington's counter-coercion by providing economic assistance as well as some political and diplomatic support to Pyongyang.

An important task for the coercer, apart from pressurizing the target, is to neutralize the negative effects of spoilers. In this dissertation, coercers have attempted to deal with spoiler issues through different strategies. In the Taliban case, Washington anticipated Islamabad's potential spoiler role and through a 'with us or against us' message, got Musharraf's support – although not that of other entities in Pakistan. On the other hand, in the Iraq case, Washington dealt with spoilers through a disinformation campaign using Russian military officials in contact with the Saddam regime.

This dissertation shows the increasing importance of third parties in coercive diplomacy, whether as facilitators or as spoilers. It implies that in formulating their strategies in a coercive equation, the target and the coercer have to account for potential spoilers at some stage of the process. As this dissertation shows, such spoilers can appear

in any form – as a state (e.g., China in the North Korean case), as well as individual actors (Pakistani religious and military leaders in the Taliban case).

### **Mixed messages**

This dissertation also highlights the impact of mixed messages and how the target perceives threats. Contradictory statements from the coercer's leadership as well as ambiguous messages increase the target's reliance on its own perceptions of what the coercer's objectives, intentions and threats are. This was displayed in the Taliban case study in which mixed messages by the Bush administration on the extent of U.S. intentions, removed any credible assurances for the Taliban, which then assumed the worst case scenario (regime change). Similarly, in the North Korean case, while the Bush administration thoroughly disapproved of the Kim Jong Il regime, there was no clear indication as to whether its main objective was counter-proliferation or regime change. Therefore, in the absence of any direct talks the possibility of mixed messages increased.

### **International strategic environment: Prioritizing coercive objectives**

A target state can base its reaction to coercion on the basis of information it has on the capacity of the coercer to carry out its threat. If the coercer's military is stretched on multiple missions, its ability to threaten effectively in yet another coercive crisis is naturally affected. Therefore, from the coercer's perspective, a clear analysis of its commitments in the global and regional strategic environment, a key contextual variable, is necessary. Following that, prioritization of broader objectives is an important component of coercive diplomacy.

This factor also has a crucial bearing on the selection of objectives of coercive diplomacy. As Robert Jervis pointed out, once it became clear after the Iraq invasion that weapons of mass destruction as the rationale for war did not hold much ground, the Bush administration increasingly relied on other rationales, especially democracy promotion to

justify the invasion.<sup>3</sup> This set a much higher standard that the administration then has to adhere to when considering strategies against other security threats. Democracy promotion was never on the Bush administration's initial agenda considering its disdain for the nation-building of the Clinton years.

The question then is – in a future coercive diplomacy case, would the U.S. attempt consistency by adding democracy to the list of objectives if the target is not sufficiently democratic? It is not clear whether the capability for such an exercise is present, given the current circumstances. Therefore, this is a stark manifestation of the problem of broad objectives. All four case studies in this dissertation exhibit problems related to high magnitude of demands that go beyond their vital national interests, and in fact deal with higher ambitions. It is therefore obvious that there is a perception gap between what the coercer believes the target's response would be and the target's actual response.

While in the Westphalian system, states controlled the use of force internally, increasingly, Washington has adopted the idea that another state's domestic systems are up for debate and modification.<sup>4</sup> Two issues then arise, how compatible is such a broad objective with the strategy of coercive diplomacy? This is a pertinent issue because while the U.S. cannot deploy its military in every conceivable situation, it requires the need to threaten the use of force. And for adequate credibility to its threats, the asymmetry of motivation has to be tilted in Washington's favor. Therefore, the question then is whether the U.S. is willing to limit its objectives, select demands that only affect its own national interests and not those of the target. For example, while democracy has been touted as a panacea for the threat of global terror, there is no evidence to support this thesis. Therefore, national interests cannot be confused for a system of government in another state that is a mirror reflection of the coercer's.

The second issue is that objectives can also be constrained by the need for political and military support from allies in the international community. Shortly after 9/11, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld stated that “the mission determines the coalition. And

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Jervis, 'Reports, Politics, and Intelligence Failures: The Case of Iraq,' *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1, February 2006, pg. 8.

<sup>4</sup> On this point see G. John Ikenberry, 'Power and liberal order: America's postwar world order in transition,' *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, Vol. 5 (2005), pg. 141.

the coalition must not be permitted to determine the mission.”<sup>5</sup> However, it is not obvious whether this motto and unlimited objectives can co-exist in future crises. International support is needed to coerce the target effectively, as this backing provides a measure of legitimacy, and is also crucial if threats have to be carried out. While the model of coercive diplomacy states that unilateral coercion can be stronger since it is easier to maintain a sense of purpose, increasingly it is obvious that to wield effective, credible threats, and to carry them out if necessary, multilateral support can be crucial. The Iraq and Afghanistan cases show that apart from these stages, international assistance is also crucial in imposing stability on the target state after the conflict.<sup>6</sup>

When we consider the Iraq and North Korea cases, a key question emerges – If Iraq’s WMD pursuit made it a fit case for aggressive action, why not North Korea which had a much more advanced nuclear weapons program and had similar hostility levels toward the U.S.? This highlights a lack of consistency in objectives that makes it harder to convince both a domestic audience and the international community to support future coercive policies. Thus, prioritization of coercive objectives across areas has to take into account the fact that such measures might be necessary in future,<sup>7</sup> and that action in the present circumstances has a bearing on the reactions of targets, allies, and populations in the future.

## **Implementation of threats**

It is also important to consider that carrying out military threats if the target does not concede is important for its demonstration effect and is an integral part of coercive diplomacy. The Afghanistan case showed the negative effects of not accomplishing fully the objectives of coercive diplomacy. The U.S. objective in coercing the Taliban centered on apprehending or neutralizing bin Laden and destroying the capability of Afghanistan to function as a terrorist base. When the Taliban did not concede, the U.S. launched a military

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<sup>5</sup> News transcript, Washington, DC, September 23, 2001, [http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2001/t09242001\\_t0923so.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2001/t09242001_t0923so.html)

<sup>6</sup> Andrew F. Krepinevich, ‘Operation Iraqi Freedom: A First-Blush Assessment,’ Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, Washington, D.C., 2006, pg. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Ivo H. Daalder & James B. Steinberg, ‘Preventive War, A Useful Tool,’ *The Los Angeles Times*, December 4, 2005.

attack. While Al Qaeda terror camps were destroyed and the Taliban overthrown, bin Laden and some of his lieutenants escaped. In November 2001, U.S. forces had cornered bin Laden and his fighters at his hideout in the Tora Bora mountains bordering Pakistan.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the U.S. did not send in adequate forces (despite CIA requests) to cut off the group's escape route into Pakistan, and the key objective of capturing bin Laden remained unfulfilled.

Bin Laden and his inner circle, especially Ayman Zawahiri survived, most probably in the Pashtun tribal belt straddling the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. From there the network has provided varying degrees of inspiration to autonomous terror cells around the world. Further, Taliban violence in Afghanistan has escalated rapidly in 2006. Thus in the long run, the objective of U.S. coercive diplomacy on the Taliban was unsuccessful not just because the Taliban did not concede, but also because American implementation of its threats against the Taliban were not carried through to their logical conclusion.

It is clear that credible coercive diplomacy also requires that military strategies to carry out the threats (if coercion fails) be tailored to the needs of the military environment.<sup>9</sup> In the period after the invasion of Iraq, as the insurgent violence increased, a U.S. Special Forces lieutenant colonel was quoted as saying, "What you are seeing here is an unconventional war being fought conventionally."<sup>10</sup> Therefore, it is not enough to have the military might and the resolve to carry out threats if the threats are going to be carried out without taking into consideration ground realities and the nature of the adversary.

## **The image of war**

The image of war is an important contextual variable in coercive diplomacy. If the coercer or the target is wary of the consequences of an actual war, the resolve of one side can falter. During the Cold War, several cases of coercive diplomacy involved the threat of nuclear confrontation between the super powers. Therefore, the idea that nuclear weapons could be used, deliberately or inadvertently, was an important calculation. As mentioned

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<sup>8</sup> Ron Suskind, *The One Percent Doctrine*, (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2006), pp. 73-75.

<sup>9</sup> Noah Feldman, 'Ballots and bullets,' *The New York Times*, July 21, 2006.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas E. Ricks, 'In Iraq, Military Forgot Lessons of Vietnam,' *The Washington Post*, July 23, 2006, pg. A01.

earlier, the nuclear element continues to be part of the coercive process in many cases and regions, especially Northeast Asia and South Asia.

However, increasingly, the international community, including the U.S., has to consider what to do after the threat is carried out. It is not enough to wield credible military threats, especially on countries with weak political and social foundations. The realization now is that carrying out the threat can frequently involve stabilization tasks in the target state after the military threat has been carried out. This naturally requires thousands of extra troops and civilian advisers as well as massive financial infusion. Such an objective comes about in two circumstances: (a) When Type 'C' coercive diplomacy (regime change) has been carried out. In this case, coercion is successful, and because the coercer's main objective was regime change, there might be an alternate leadership to take the place, i.e., the coercer introduced clarity of eventual settlement. Nevertheless, the coercer and the international community would have to provide various degrees of assistance to stabilize the fledgling regime. (b) When regime change is not the main agenda, but in the process of carrying out the threat, the existing regime collapses anyway. In this case, the coercer might or might not have anticipated the resulting requirements.

Regardless of the circumstances, regime collapse of the target then involves a major broadening of the coercer's objectives – from changing the target's behavior or the regime itself to rebuilding the target's society and polity. It also means realizing that with such a broad objective, delicate power structures within the target regimes can be irreparably disturbed leading to chaos and instability. Coercive diplomacy that might eventually involve nation-building suffers from the basic problem of this strategy – magnitude of demands. According to one expert, nation-building plans suffer due to a chasm between the objective and the commitment level of the coercer.<sup>11</sup> This scenario was displayed in the aftermath of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

U.S. military agencies have since undertaken comprehensive evaluations of their roles in Iraq and Afghanistan and these reports have quoted Pentagon officials as stating that serious flaws were detected in the overall plans.<sup>12</sup> The issue then is whether the U.S.

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<sup>11</sup> James Dobbins, 'Preparing for Nation-Building,' *Survival*, Vol. 48, No. 3, Autumn 2006, pg. 32.

<sup>12</sup> Tom Regan, 'Pentagon studies examine 'mistakes' in Iraq, Afghanistan,' *Christian Science Monitor*, August 16, 2006, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0816/dailyUpdate.html>

would be automatically self-restrained in carrying out its coercive military strategy or whether it would have the capacity to overcome these obstacles and again resort to coercive measures elsewhere, while taking into account the fact that it might be involved in post-coercion/war stabilization program in the target state.

If it did anticipate the post-regime change scenario and its own responsibilities, the coercer might be restrained in its coercion. Even if it does try coercive diplomacy, it might then be restrained in the process, and try a less intense version, with lesser objectives – the wait and see approach or the turning of the screw, rather than the ultimatum variant. Further, because the adversary is now aware of the situation, the coercer's threats carry less credibility. Thus, the image of war now involves not just scenarios of massive destruction but also the responsibility for post-regime change political stabilization in the target. These goals require cooperation from the international community, international organizations and so coercive diplomacy has to expand its horizons and consider global-governance related issues.

A further issue is learning the wrong lessons from other coercive confrontations. After the overthrow of the Taliban, the U.S. quickly turned its attention to Saddam Hussein, without considering the massive ground force that would be required to stabilize a post-Saddam Iraq. Analysts before the Iraq invasion had pointed out that Afghanistan and Iraq were very different entities and if regime change were effected, dissimilar strategies had to be applied.<sup>13</sup>

## **Coercive diplomacy, Non-state actors, and Governance incapacity**

Governance incapacity arises when ruling regimes (whether democratic or dictatorial) cannot control non-state groups operating in their territory. In the context of coercive diplomacy this can mean the difference between the target regime resisting demands and conceding to them. Even if the regime somehow comes round to the idea that conceding (to some degree) to the coercer's demands would be a better policy choice, it may not be in

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<sup>13</sup> For example, Faleh A. Jabar, 'The Iraqi Army and the Anti-Army: Some Reflections on the Role of the Military,' in Toby Dodge & Steven Simon (ed.) *Iraq at the Crossroads: State and Society in the Shadow of Regime Change*, Adelphi Paper 354, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, January 2003).

a position to implement these decisions. Such possibilities include vacation of territory by a non-state group. A relevant example could be the Hezbollah's dominance of parts of southern Lebanon. While it is debatable whether the government in Beirut is completely behind Hezbollah's aims which are sectarian in character (as opposed to the multi-religious nature of the country), it is not necessarily in a position to do anything about it, because of the immense power that the largely Shia group commands.

The governance incapability factor is also an increasing problem in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Tribal areas in Pakistan, especially Waziristan) bordering Afghanistan are now home to thousands of militants owing allegiance to the broad Taliban network, which extends across the border in to Afghanistan. Extremism in these areas has been exacerbated by radical clerics as well as the presence of 80,000 Pakistani army troops stationed there to combat Taliban and Al Qaeda linked groups.<sup>14</sup> This network of ethnic Pashtun tribes with Taliban links saddles the vast, geographically inhospitable border area between the two countries. Islamabad has traditionally enjoyed very little control over these areas and tribes while the fledgling government in Kabul is too weak to control its side of the border. Therefore, coercing these regimes is meaningless if the actual targets of demands and threats are non-state groups which are effectively autonomous. Further, the coercer also has to consider that if the governments in these countries try to impose these externally mandated demands on hostile tribal groups that might provoke a backlash inflaming the situation further.

Nevertheless, states such as India and the U.S. have tried to surmount the 'statelessness' of terror groups by instead threatening states and entities that are associated with them. The introductory chapter highlighted the difficulty of coercing highly motivated terror groups which, theoretically, cannot be punished because they have no permanent base. Therefore, by threatening the Taliban and Pakistan, Washington and New Delhi attempted to impose some costs on support structures and associated entities of the main targets.

Increasingly, governance incapacity also becomes a factor when non-state groups start providing services that have traditionally been the domain of the state. In Lebanon,

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<sup>14</sup> Ron Moreau & Zahid Hussain, 'Border Backlash,' *Newsweek International*, July 31, 2006, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/13990130/site/newsweek/>



Hezbollah has built up enormous popular support not just through its armed resistance to Israel, but also through the massive social services network in the area it controls, including hospitals and schools. Another contemporary example is the role of militant-linked charities, especially Jamaat ud Dawa (a sister organization of Lashkar-e-Toiba) in relief work following the Kashmir earthquake in 2005. JUD garnered a huge chunk of relief funds, some of which might have come from foreign sources, increasing its resource base, while also gaining immense popular support, at a time when the Pakistani army was slow to begin relief operations. These examples show how activities of non-state groups can cut into the authority and legitimacy that the government might want to impose in these areas. In times of crises, when a coercer targets these entities, they have to contend with two issues. First, that these groups become more powerful logistically through the networks they established. Second, it becomes more difficult to whip up popular support against them, enabling these groups to resist coercion, whether from an external actor, or from their own governments.

But on the other hand, when such groups build up social and logistical networks, it also provides them with a 'return address,' which can then be threatened by a coercer. Israel's summer 2006 bombing campaign against targets in Lebanon has to be seen in this context.

A different variant of the governance incapacity issue arises when the coercer exploits possible divisions within the target's regime to help achieve its objectives. Such a strategy has reportedly been applied by the U.S. against North Korea. By increasingly cracking down on criminal activities of the Pyongyang regime, Washington sought to squeeze an important source of revenue through which Kim Jong Il has bought the allegiance of the regime's elites. This would then provoke dissatisfaction against Kim.

Thus, governance incapacity is relevant in two ways from the coercive diplomacy perspective. On the one hand, it shows how coercion can fail because a target government may not have the capacity to rein in the perpetrators of the actual provocation. On the other hand, the coercer can increase chances of successful coercion by indirectly targeting potentially disgruntled elements of the regime and inducing governance incapacity.

The contemporary international political system thus shows important changes in the equation between state and non-state actors, which has a crucial bearing on the conduct

of coercive diplomacy. 'Traditional' state-sponsorship involved a state that was the major player while the terror/insurgent group was the subsidiary. Therefore, more often than not the flow of power, influence, money, and logistics has been one way from the state sponsor to the terror/insurgent group. But increasingly this equation is being challenged in the ways described above. Non-state elements are becoming more powerful vis-à-vis their state sponsors. Several questions arise here in the context of coercive diplomacy.

For one thing, it is not clear who the target of coercion would be. For example, even if the U.S. and Israel seek to punish Hezbollah to send a message to Iran, such a message may not be valid because the military tactics employed against the Hezbollah might not work against Iran. Indeed the debate on Israel's bombardment of Hezbollah in summer 2006 generated an important question – If Israel's air force could not destroy the Hezbollah, how could the U.S. expect to destroy Iran's nuclear facilities, even the nuclear ones, without causing massive civilian casualties. An important conceptual point here is that through proxies, the main actors in a coercive equation can gather valuable information about the adversary's intentions, capabilities, and tactics.

A slightly different equation arises when non-state actors act as proxies for other states. Hezbollah can be used as an example here also. It is widely believed that Iran and Syria provide logistical, financial, military and political support to the mainly Shia militia operating in Lebanon.<sup>15</sup> According to some analysts, the Hezbollah-Israel conflict is increasingly a proxy war between the U.S. and Iran,<sup>16</sup> as Washington seeks to formulate policies (including coercive ones) to neutralize Tehran's nuclear program. The process of coercive diplomacy becomes more complicated, whether it involves aerial bombardment of the type seen in summer 2006 or mainly diplomatic moves.

In any crisis, the sponsor can claim to have no connection to the activities of its proxy, and if the global strategic environment is in its favor, this approach can drag the matter to a stalemate, at the very least. Here, an important variable favoring coercive diplomacy – opponent's fear of unacceptable escalation – works against the coercer. While

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<sup>15</sup> For a brief summary of Hezbollah-Iran ties see Borzou Daragahi, 'The Roots of Hezbollah's Clout Lie In Iran,' *The Los Angeles Times*, September 10, 2006.

<sup>16</sup> Robin Wright, 'Returning to Old Approach, U.S. Faces Risky Path Ahead,' *The Washington Post*, July 30, 2006, pg. A18.

striking the proxy might be acceptable for the coercer, it might also demonstrate its reluctance to strike the sponsor directly for fear of provoking a wider conflagration.

The preceding discussion showed the complicated relationship between non-state actors, their state sponsors, and coercers. Thus, it is safe to suggest that a coercive equation of this sort has three components, not just the traditional coercer-target dyad.

### **Coercive diplomacy through popular discontent**

Two recent examples, both concerning Lebanon, show how the concept of coercive diplomacy can possibly be expanded to include recent trends in global politics. In the first example, following the February 2005 assassination of Rafiq al-Hariri, former Prime Minister of Lebanon, Washington put pressure on Syria to own up to its culpability in the assassination and more crucially, withdraw its troops from Lebanon. In the second example, the Israeli government launched an air bombardment of Hezbollah strongholds in Lebanon in summer 2005. These attacks also lead to considerable civilian casualties in the country, as Hezbollah targets are situated in the midst of populations.

A variant of this strategy involves the coercer putting slow pressure on the target government and the population (turning of the screw variant of coercive diplomacy) so that the target population turns against its government. It is inherently a Type C variant in which the coercer seeks a change in the regime of the target. Admittedly this is a slow and risky process. For example, American pressures on the Iranian government risk uniting the country's population even more behind the ruling regime, even though there is broad disenchantment with the clerics. On the other hand, as reports suggest in 2006, there is growing dissatisfaction among certain sections of the Palestinian people on the payrolls of the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority government, which has been hit by a financial squeeze from international sponsors such as the European Union and the U.S.<sup>17</sup> This also shows how internal characteristics of the target regime matter. If the target is relatively strong financially and is able to control the population, this variant of coercion is less

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<sup>17</sup> Ken Ellingwood, 'Palestinians begin to direct blame inward,' *The Los Angeles Times*, September 2, 2006.

likely to be successful. However, on a fledgling, fragmented regime, such coercion has a greater chance of success.

## **Coercive diplomacy and international economics**

In this era of globalization, an increasingly important factor is how economic dynamics impact on coercive diplomacy. This became obvious during the Iraq and North Korea coercion cases, in which influential actors either provided economic support to the target or made their decisions at least partly for economic reasons. Of course, here we cannot underestimate the element of great power politics. In the Iraq case, part of the reason for French, German, and Russian opposition lay in the need to re-establish their own global identities, and to create a security framework that did not depend on the U.S. Nevertheless, commercial factors did impact in several cases.

For the Iraq war, one motivation attributed to the Bush administration was that it invaded the country to protect its oil supplies in an age of sky-rocketing oil prices. The 2002 U.S. National Security Strategy also talked of the need to protect fuel sources and supply routes. Even if such a motivation played only a tangential role in the Iraq conflict, it is fair to conclude that similar factors will increasingly loom large in a state's decision-making calculations. For example, China's search for fuel sources has led it to alliances in various parts of the globe, including Iran and several African countries. In a coercive policy against Iran, it would therefore be very difficult for the U.S. to achieve key elements of coercive diplomacy – international support, and isolation of the adversary. Even though the U.S. has been pressing for restraints and hurdles to Iran's international financial dealings, Tehran's status as the fourth largest oil producer gives it enormous clout. Consequently, such economic realities become major constraints on U.S. coercive activity.

A second element is the application of pressure through foreign direct investment (FDI) flows. In the South Asia case, the threatened outflow of investment by multinational corporations was a factor considered by the Indian government. Admittedly, this tactic can have particular impact when applied against states that are experiencing high economic growth and cannot afford this kind of sudden disruption. Such a strategy would not have

had any effect against the Taliban's Afghanistan, which was already in a dire economic situation.

## **Identity, Preferences and Perceptions**

The chapter on the Taliban highlights the importance of accurate images of the adversary. The post-Cold War period has been characterized by increasing rivalries based on religion, ethnicity, culture, and language. This has come about as increasingly, populations are becoming aware of various levels of their identities. To take the Afghanistan case, various groups based there have multiple identities, based on religion (Islam), sect (Shia, Sunni), and ethnicity (Pashtun, Tajik, Uzbek, Hazara, among others). This implies that every group/militia/political party will have a specific set of preferences based on these components of their identity.<sup>18</sup>

In any confrontation, a coercer will have to take into account these complexities and also try to determine the preference structure for each group. This is because each component of the group's identity will have its own objectives which may not necessarily coincide with the preferences of the other components. For example, in June 1996, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, an ethnic Pashtun radical Islamic Afghan warlord, switched sides to rejoin the Tajik forces of Ahmed Shah Masood and those of Uzbek warlord Rashid Dostum, to combat the Taliban, an ethnic Pashtun group with a very conservative Islamic identity. Thus, here the common ethnic and religious identity was subordinated to personal ambition.

As the theory of coercive diplomacy states, the assumption of pure rationality has to be reconciled with preferences rooted in religious, cultural, ethnic, and social traditions. According to one viewpoint, this impacts on strategic behavior in two ways. First, cultural specifications of one party can make it act in certain ways that the other party may not understand but which are rational from the perspective of the first party. Second, cultural

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<sup>18</sup> For a brief analysis of ethnic political divisions in Afghanistan, see Norman Friedman, *Terrorism, Afghanistan and America's New Way of War*, (Annapolis, MD, Naval Institute Press, 2003), pg. 67-87.

issues can decide the objectives of one side which then give rise to appropriate methods of achieving those objectives.<sup>19</sup>

But as this dissertation, and especially the research on coercion on the Taliban shows, there are nuances to every position and attitude. While Pashtunwali was viewed as a rigid tribal code that would not tolerate any infringement, there were exceptions to the rules. For example, one Pashtun politician and tribal leader stated in 2004, the Pashtunwali norms of refuge (panaah) and hospitality (melmastia) would not apply to Al Qaeda, stating that “if anyone is going to be the cause of war for me, then his moral obligation is to leave.”<sup>20</sup>

After the conclusion of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, Taliban and Al Qaeda militants sought refuge among tribal populations on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. But the tribal people were being paid large amounts of money in exchange for food and shelter. It would be easy to assume this as part of the Pashtunwali creed, but as the politician mentioned above stated, “this is earning, not Pashtunwali.”<sup>21</sup> This implies that adequate information about the adversary can help formulate effective strategies for coercion.

The Iraq case highlighted the vital role played by information and intelligence in a coercive policy. Paradoxically, the lack of adequate information about potential post-invasion insurgency had the effect of emboldening U.S. resolve to carry out the invasion, which should have simultaneously had a greater coercive effect. Since that backfired, it is crucial to ask how will this factor effect future coercive measures, both in the target as well as coercer? Potential target states can then learn the importance of ambiguity and keep the coercer in the dark about their future intentions.

This information variable also includes adequate understanding of the adversary’s threat perceptions. As the Iraq case demonstrated, Saddam’s belief system and decision-making structure did not allow him to place the U.S. at the top of his list of threats. While it would be tempting to label as irrational those beliefs in the adversary that do not correspond to the coercer’s, it is more crucial to understand the empirical evidence that

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<sup>19</sup> See Ken Booth, *Strategy and Ethnocentrism*, (New York, NY: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1979), pp. 63-65.

<sup>20</sup> Eliza Griswold, ‘In the Hiding Zone,’ *The New Yorker*, July 26, 2004.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

leads the decision-maker in the target state to a certain policy option.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, an important element of formulating a successful coercive strategy is understanding the target's own perceptions of the coercer's threats and demands and how much importance it (the target) places on them.

It would be constructive to see how this analysis would apply to Kim Jong Il, who has been variously described as 'irrational,' 'madman,' etc. But it is entirely possible that his seemingly irrational resistance could be rooted in the belief that since a future regime in Pyongyang might not have a place for him or offer him any security, resistance and coercion would be preferable.

## Conclusion

The flexibility of the components of the theory of coercive diplomacy allows us to test its propositions and conjectures on various contemporary cases. It highlights the flow of decisions in a crisis situation, as well as the motives behind them. The challenge now is to incorporate changing dynamics such the rise of non-state actors into its fold, to comprehensively demonstrate the circumstances in which coercion succeeds and fails.

These salient features of contemporary coercive diplomacy reiterate one key objective of the coercer in any given situation – ensuring that the **asymmetry of interests** remains in its favor, because only then will the target be inclined to concede. Thus, whether through modifying objectives, or offering reassurances, or giving 'carrots,' the aim is to prevent the target's fundamental interests from being violated. This is the most prominent element that has persisted through decades of research on coercive diplomacy.

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<sup>22</sup> See for example Robert Jervis, 'Understanding Beliefs,' *Political Psychology*, Vol. 27, No. 5, 2006, pg. 643.

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